

HISTORICAL SITES IN OLDE TOWNE DAPHNE

TWO HISTORY WALKS

THE BAY BOAT ERA

Start this 1.2 mile walk at May Day Park, or pick up the trail at the Olde Daphne Museum and walk this loop through Olde Towne. Public parking is available at both sites.

32 The May Day Park Neighborhood: The park boundaries have changed with time, the shoreline and the advent of paved roads. The first May Day event was held in 1917 and the tradition lasted for more than 50 years. The community participated in events for 2 days with a May pole, crowned the queen, held barbecue fundraisers for the school, etc. The Daphne Normal School, May Day Park and the Daphne Wharf, just south of the park, marked the center of Daphne until the end of the bay boats era, which coincided with the opening of the causeway in 1927. Wharf Street is no longer open and our neighborhood pier is currently located at May Day Park.

Cross the street from May Day Park to 1410 Captain O’Neal Drive: This was the site of the Baldwin County Court House **33**. It was the seat of government and jail from 1868 until 1901 when a prisoner was released from the jail and forced to help move the county records to Bay Minette. When they arrived with the records, he was immediately put into jail in Bay Minette! In 1907, it became the Daphne State Normal School. It was a teachers college and public school for grades 1 to 12. Boarding houses nearby accommodated students from the teacher college. In 1940, the school closed. During WWII, the building was divided into small wood cubicles and housed families who came to the area to do war work. There was one family per cubicle. The former school and jail were demolished in 1958. The Nicholson Center building currently on the site was funded by the estate of George Albert Nicholson, who lived nearby on the bay.

Cross College Avenue and walk north passing by the north-east corner of College Avenue and Captain O’Neal Drive: This was the site of “Old” Dryers Drugstore **34** c.1903, actually a general store with ice cream. It was a gathering place for students. The structure has since been incorporated into a home. Dryers Drugstore moved to Main Street in the 1930’s after the last bay boat crossed the bay. The heart of town had moved to Main Street. *Private home.*

Continue walking north on Captain O’Neal Drive to Dryer Avenue: Read the Historic marker **35** at Dryer Avenue and walk down the public beach access to the water. This was once a wharf and a landing for the steam powered paddle wheel bay boats. The bay boats brought residents and travelers across the bay from 1807 to October 1933.

From the Dryer Avenue historic marker, walk to the sidewalk and look north onto the Bayside Academy campus at 303 Dryer Avenue: The Howard Hotel **36** c.1833, is a two story Greek Revival structure at the center of the campus and is currently the Administration Building for this private school. It once sat on 123 acres and was a popular hotel with a reputation for a nearby stream’s rejuvenating waters. The stream still flows to the bay. During the Civil War, Admiral Farragut shelled the shoreline and the hotel was hit by 3 cannon balls. Fragments remain in the structure. In 1894, the hotel was renamed the Daphne Springs Hotel by Mr. Dryer. It was a Scholasticate for Catholic Brothers of Sacred Heart before its current use. *Private school campus.*

Continue walking east, part way up the hill and look across the street to 306 Dryer Avenue: The Texas **37** c.1835, is one of the oldest structures in Baldwin County. It was moved across the street from the grounds of the old Howard Hotel to its current site in 1907. Its sister structures ‘The California’ and ‘The Long Branch’ have both been lost. ‘The Texas’ has Creole features, a first floor central hall and recessed balustrade porch. The porch is a forerunner of the local rain porch. *Private home.*

Continue walking uphill, cross Old County Road and stop at 405 Dryer Avenue: The Old Daphne Methodist Church and Cemetery **38**, built in 1858. It is the second oldest of only two remaining antebellum churches in Baldwin County. The rear gallery and side entry for slaves remains, as does the original heart pine floors, lighting fixtures and pews. The original church bell, lined with silver dollars, is displayed at the Daphne United Methodist Church on Main Street.

The cemetery predates the church, with the earliest marked grave from 1847. Civil War era graves include a pair of brothers killed in Spanish Fort during the final days of war, four casualties from the ironclad the ‘Osage’, and a mass grave of Union soldiers killed by torpedo (mines) on Mobile Bay. David Moniac, the first Native American to graduate from West Point, and several beloved slaves also rest under the oaks. The old church is now the home of the Old Daphne Museum. *Hours 1-4 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday or by appointment.*

Walk to the fence in the cemetery and look into the woods at Dryer and Third Streets: This was the site of a cotton gin in the 1830’s and then Daphne Pottery **39** which operated from 1907 to about 1950. Clay turpentine cups were produced here and used to collect sap from pines in the local tracts of forest. It also produced household and ornamental items. Charcoal braziers used for outdoor cooking were the last products made at this site. Part of an original pair of beehive kilns and a chimney are visible in the woods.

From the Museum, cross the street and walk south on Third Street to College Avenue to 415 College Ave: Formerly Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church **40**, this structure was built in 1926 in memory of Gratz Malone who died at age 9. A clay altar was made by master potter Peter McAdam. Before the work was completed, McAdam’s own son Peter died at age 18 in an accident at nearby May Day Park. His son was the first to be baptized and buried in this small church. In 1976, the clay altar shattered when the congregation attempted to move it to their new church on Main Street.

Continue by walking west, toward the bay, down College Ave, cross to Second Street and walk south on Second Street to McMillan Avenue: Several homes on this street were boarding houses for students at the Normal School across the street. The street becomes a narrow shell road under a canopy of trees. It is one of the last of the unpaved lanes in the neighborhood and reflects the way life was in Daphne years ago.

At McMillan Avenue (lower end of the Potter’s Mill subdivision), turn right and arrive at 1214 Captain O’Neal Drive on the corner: The McMillan House **41**, c.1900, is a gulf coast style cottage that has been the home for many families over the years. It was used in the movie ‘War and Remembrance’ in 1988 as part of scenes from Hawaii. *Private home.*

Continue walking west toward the bay on McMillan Avenue, cross Captain O’Neal Drive, walk to Lovette Lane and the McMillan Bluff Beach Access: The former Tapia Home, 1907, on the left of the beach access, and the Stapleton-Voltz-Council house **42**, 1900, on the right are beautiful examples of the old cottages that remain on this quiet lane. Enjoy the view from the top of the stairs, then walk north on Lovette Lane. There are several gardens with large, old camellias and azaleas. Lovette Lane ends at Wharf Street, currently closed.

From the McMillan Bluff Access, walk north on Lovette Lane and turn right as it loops back onto Captain O’Neal Drive. Cross the street to the sidewalk and continue north one block: Take a moment to enjoy the enormous oaks. On the left side of the street, between the Craftsman and Victorian cottages, were the sites of the Daphne Pier and Wharf Street **43**. The pier once had a wood structure called “The Casino,” used for public events and the Daphne Normal School gymnasium. Mules once pulled carts on a small gauge rail system to bring freight up the hill.

Continue to 1404 Captain O’Neal Drive: The Captain O’Neal Home **44**, 1835, is the oldest Gulf Coast style cottage in Baldwin County. This home was owned by two generations of bay boat captains, Captain James O’Neal and then his son Captain William O’Neal. *Private home. Arrive back at May Day Park, across the street from the Captain O’Neal Home.*

THE BAY TRAIL

Years ago, all the hotels and bay front homes had walking paths with gates at either end of each property. Residents could walk along the bluffs by the bay and visit neighbors or catch a bay boat. The direction of the wind determined where the boat would land, and it was necessary to walk on the path to determine where to meet the boat! These paths no longer exist, but there are still public links to the bay in Olde Towne. Belrose Avenue, Dryer Avenue, May Day Park and the McMillan Bluff Beach Access all provide walkers with access to the beach. Each one has a unique flavor. **Belrose 31** offers views of the streams that brought fresh water to 19th century ships and resorts. The white bluffs in the area were used as navigation points for sailing ships. This was the site of the Yuille Wharf. Only the pilings from the wharf remain visible today. There is a short set of stairs leading down to the water and the beach is wide and flat. **Dryer 35** was the site of a bay boat landing and Admiral Farragut’s canons fired at the area after the battle of Mobile Bay while on their way to the siege of Spanish Fort. **May Day Park 32** was the former heart of town. It now includes a neighborhood fishing pier, a boat launch, a children’s playground, public toilets and wheelchair access to the beach. **McMillan Bluff Beach Access 42** is serene with a meandering path planted with traditional and native plants. Neighborhood residents usually stroll down one access, walk the beach and walk back up on another. It is a mix and match walk depending on the time of day and the weather. Sunsets are wonderful from any of them! If you are driving, **pleasant park** at May Day Park on Captain O’Neal and College Avenues. Olde Towne streets can be narrow and parking is restricted.



Olde Towne Daphne Guide

DAPHNE WATERFRONT

1 Gator Alley is a half mile raised boardwalk that meanders over D’Olive Creek and provides walkers with a view of the habitat of the American alligator, waterfowl, turtles, crawfish, snakes, and native plants and trees. It is handicapped accessible and picnic tables are available. Parking is on North Main Street at the southern end of the boardwalk.

2 Daphne Bayfront Park facilities include a lit public pier. It is not uncommon to see alligators taking an evening swim, and it is a beautiful place to view a sunset! The Richard Scardamalia Pavilion facilities can be rented for events.

3 Village Point Park Preserve, located on Main Street and Yancey Branch, includes native American mounds from the 1500’s. It was the 1670 campsite of early French explorers and soldiers. In the 1760’s, it was the original ‘Village’ of early French settlers. These first settlers died in a yellow fever epidemic in 1820 and are buried in the D’Olive Cemetery in the Preserve. Spanish troops have marched through the area, and it was also the site of a Revolutionary War battle. Confederate soldiers camped here. Union soldiers landed at piers which existed during the campaigns to capture Spanish Fort and Fort Blakeley. Local legend is that Andrew Jackson stopped here and spoke to his troops from a large oak before going on to fight in the Battle of New Orleans. A spectacular tree, called Jackson’s Oak, is said to be that tree. Several State Champion native trees are labeled and preserved in the park. Parking and restrooms available.

52 Campbell Swamp is 20 acres of pristine wetlands held for the future use of our community.



Our thanks to local historian Al Guarisco and artist Ted Burn. This Guide was created by the Olde Towne Daphne Association (OTDA) and printed through a generous grant from the Daphne Redevelopment Authority.

P.O. Box 1022, Daphne, AL 36526
ContactUs@OldeTowneDaphne.org
www.OldeTowneDaphne.org

All rights reserved. Reproduction prohibited in any form without permission. February 2013.

4 27366 Main Street: The grave of William A. Patterson, 1847, includes a melancholy inscription on the headstone. His cotton gin and store were destroyed in a fire and he died at age 30, according to legend, in a duel over a forbidden love. Another legend is that when his headstone was moved during the construction of the road, his remains were left under the road! In fact, no one knows!

5 27120 US Highway 98 (east side HWY 98, behind Bayview Ford): The Yancey-Crane Cemetery. William Yancey survived the Fort Mims massacre in 1813 and received a pension from his War of 1812 service as a drummer boy with Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans in 1815. He was in his late 90’s when he died in 1895 and was buried in this cemetery. Earlier remains are from residents of the original settlement who died in the 1820’s from a yellow fever epidemic.

6 2400 Old Spanish Trail (east side HWY 98): The Haunted Masonic Lodge, c. 1930, was constructed over an old well. Local lore is that the spirit of a Confederate soldier killed in 1864 still haunts the site. He guarded resident’s valuables, which had been hidden in a well, but they disappeared. Because he failed at his duties, he does not rest in peace and still roams the site. It is also reported that he does not tolerate cursing.

7 Haley’s Lane, west side of Main Street: Site of Starke’s Wharf, the principle crossing for Mobile Bay. This wharf was an important site for moving goods, troops and equipment in both the War of 1812 and the Civil War. It was named for Lewis Starke who served as a private secretary to General Jackson. *Private Road.*

8 101 Villa Drive: Original site of the Hammett Home, 1904. Mr. Hammett operated several sawmills and was also the president of the Bank of Daphne. It was converted in 1949, by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy, into a small convalescent home called Villa Mercy. Currently, it is a skilled nursing home for the elderly and for acute rehabilitation.

9 Old County Road at Villa Drive: Two historic cemeteries. The Daphne Baptist Cemetery was donated to the church in 1890. In the woods, along the northern side of the fence is the Stokes Private Cemetery, c.1863. Samuel Stokes left his plantation to fight in the Civil War and returned to find his home burned and his wife and 3 children dead. They are buried here with their housekeeper and later generations of the family.

10 2300 Main Street: Daphne Elementary School was built in 1939 to educate children in grades 1 to 9. It was a state of the art school for Baldwin County with indoor restrooms and an intercom. The first public school on the Eastern Shore was formed in 1859 in Montrose. Early education in Daphne had been in homes, churches or one room schoolhouses with the teacher’s salary paid by local families. In Daphne, from 1867 until the yellow fever epidemic in 1873, elementary grades were taught at the Hollywood Hotel on Captain O’Neal Drive. Between 1907 and 1940, classrooms were located in the Daphne Normal School by May Day Park, schools were segregated.

11 2304 Main Street: The Gabel Farmhouse, c.1880. The owners of this dairy farm delivered milk around town in a model A truck. Mrs. Gabel was the daughter of Elijah Wilson who was a waterboy during the seize of Spanish Fort.

12 2206 Main Street: The hand hewn wood siding of an 1840’s structure is still visible on the side of this local business.

13 1902 Main Street: Little Bethel Church and Cemetery, c.1858. One of the oldest churches surviving in Baldwin County, it was built by newly emancipated slaves on land deeded to them by Major Starke. Russell Dick is buried in the cemetery, along with his mother Lucy. It is believed that Lucy was brought to Mobile on the ‘Clotilde’, the last slave ship to arrive in America.

14 1900 Main Street: During the 1929 Depression, the Federal Government provided canning equipment so that local farmers could learn how to preserve their excess produce. The building is still known as ‘The Cannery.’

15 1813 Main Street: This was originally the site of Baggette’s Flower Shop. Ruth Rayford Bagette was the daughter of one of the first Daphne City Councilmen. Her husband Mack served as chairman of the water board. He was instrumental in creating a water system which made it possible to have a volunteer fire department. Mrs. Baggette ran the flower shop for 42 years!

16 1800 Main Street: When the heart of town moved from the bay to Main Street, the “Old” Dryers Drugstore also moved, and the “New” Dryers Drugstore, c.1930, opened in the corner portion of this building. The northern portion of the building was the former office of Dr. L. E. Rockwell, a much loved local physician.

17 1716 Main Street: The Frank Mancini Block, c.1940 building, once a store, is now home to several local merchants and businesses.

18 1715 Main Street: The Mancini Block, c.1900. The northern section was a warehouse and gasoline station. It has been the location of Mancini’s Antique Club for generations.

1709 Main Street: The Mancini Block, c.1900. The middle section was the Trione Store in 1903. From 1930 to 1950, it was the hub of town. It served as the main grocery store, Greyhound bus depot, ice cream shop, candy store and florist. A bulletin board inside posted help wanted signs, tax and assessor notices, immunization schedules and offers for free puppies. It had the only phone in town and all mail was sent here! In the early 1900’s, the southern portion of the building was the Daphne State Bank until it closed in the Depression. In 1927, it was the site of the Daphne Post Office. Currently it is home to two popular restaurants.

19 Daphne Avenue/Guarisco Streets: The homesites of Albert Wright and Russell Dick were located across the street from the Daphne Post Office. Mr. Wright made charcoal for cooking fuel on this site and delivered charcoal and ice to homes in the community. Russell Dick was a prominent and enterprising African American landowner and citizen. Mr. Dick, who served as a cook in the Confederate Army, owned the property which is now Centennial Park.

20 902 Daphne Avenue: Macedonia Baptist Church was established in 1878 during Reconstruction by Rev. A.A. Williams, the first pastor. The church has been renovated over the years. It originally faced the Old Community Well, 1904, on Guarisco St. The well is marked with a plaque at the street.

21 1501 Main Street: The Church of the Assumption was founded in the 1890’s to serve the Italian Catholic community. Italy’s Queen Margherita of Savoy was impressed with the colony. She sent the priest vestments, an illuminated bible, and books for the colony for the Feast of Corpus Christi held on June 9, 1898. The original wood structure was replaced in 1937 with a brick building, now called Assumption Hall. The current church, Christ the King, was built in 1993. The names of the original Italian colonists are inscribed in pavers in front of the church. The school, which started its first classes in 1950, is located between the two church buildings.

22 1506 Main Street: The Bryant-Stapleton-Coster Home, was built in 1897 for the captain of the bay boat called the ‘Daphne’. The Hall and Edmundson families employed a teacher for their children in this home. Local lore is that it served as a temporary school house until 1937. Today, this home is the site of the East Shore Cafe.

23 1411 Main Street: The Russell Garage, c.1930, was once a bicycle shop, and then Daphne’s first automobile dealership and repair shop. The Frame Corner shares this space today.

24 1400 Main Street: Formerly the Bertagnoli General Store, c. 1898. This Greek revival building with white columns had living quarters upstairs and the shop below. *Private home.*

25 808 Van Avenue: The Barg Nard Van Nette Home was originally part of 23 acres. Mr. Van Nette was remembered as a kind and intellectual person who was said to have chosen to live in Daphne “for its tranquil atmosphere”. Van Nette Avenue would be the correct name for the street! *Private home.*

26 1515 Sixth Street: Daphne Baptist Church, c.1949. The Reverend Lorenzo Dow was originally an itinerant minister who traveled on horseback and held services in private homes. He became the minister to the first protestant congregation in Daphne. The original wood structure was replaced by a brick church on land donated by William and Clarence Dryer. The original bell hangs outside on the north side of the main entrance.

27 Old City Hall and Jail: 1704 Sixth Street. Tucked behind City Hall, this small 1955 building was Daphne’s Town Hall. It housed the fire, public works, utilities, police departments, and even the jail. The single jail cell remains in the building which is now home to the Bay Rivers Art Guild (BRAG).

28 1707 Sixth Street: Leonard D. Trione Fire Station #1. Site of the first fire station, it was built in 1954 and manned by volunteer fire fighters. Leonard “Red” Trione lived next door. When a call was received, he started the fire truck to have it ready for the volunteers. Currently, it is used for volunteer firefighter’s activities and fire safety education.

29 1615 Sixth Street: The Woodmen of the World meeting hall was built c. 1907 for a life insurance/death benefit agency and social organization. It was the first public building in town and had a wooden dance floor. Some residents remember roller skating there as children in the 1920’s. In the 1930’s, movies were shown in the building and in 1936 it was the temporary school while Daphne Elementary School was being built. There was an outdoor privy for the students! The graves of several Woodmen exist in local cemeteries and are decorated with a stacked wood motif.

30 Lea Avenue/Old County Road: The Jones-Lea-Caffey House, 1846 Creole cottage. During the Civil War, this home was used as a hospital and the long shutters were removed and used as stretchers. Porches and additions have been made over the years, but it remains one of the oldest buildings in Daphne. Mr. Jones donated silver dollars to line the bell at the Daphne Methodist Church. *Private home.*

45 Captain O’Neal Drive and Beall Lane south to Durnford Hill Court: The former site of two antebellum hotels, the Hollywood and the Shorts. These hotels were located midway between McMillan Ave and the walking bridge north of the curve in the road by Beall Lane. The Hollywood, c.1854, had a steamboat landing and stagecoach depot. Travelers from Pensacola left the coach to take the steamboat across the bay. In 1867, it was used as a school and closed in 1873 after a yellow fever outbreak. It was destroyed by fire. The Shorts Hotel, 1860, was located on Major Lewis Starke’s former plantation. It had a pier with carts powered by sails to move cargo off the pier. The hotel burned in the 1870’s.

46 Durnford Hill Court and Captain O’Neal Drive: Between 1763 and 1780, when the British occupied Baldwin County, this was the site of the 200 acre Durnford Plantation, owned by British Acting Governor Thomas Durnford. It is now the site of many bay front homes and the residential street named Durnford Hill Court.

47 O’Neal Pottery: The brick walls on Main Street and Potter’s Mill Avenue mark part of the property of the master potter, Peter Wright McAdams. McAdams came to Alabama from Scotland as a child in 1869. After he married Florence O’Neal, the daughter of Captain James O’Neal, he operated his father-in-law’s business O’Neal Pottery. The kilns were located approximately at the junction of Potter’s Mill, McAdams and McMillan Avenues. Later, McMillan worked at Daphne Pottery on 3rd Street and Dryer Avenue.

48 1001 Main Street: The Pine Grove Masonic Lodge was constructed in 1919 from large bricks made in Daphne for the Masonic Lodge and Order of the Eastern Star. During segregation, it was a meeting place for African American Masonic members.

49 50 1000 Main Street: Early African-American education was held in one-room school houses. In 1889, they were consolidated by Rev. S. B. Bracy into a 2 room private school called the Eastern Shore Missionary Baptist Academy for Negroes. In 1916, the Academy was deeded to the state and the name changed to the Eastern Shore Industrial School, for grades 1-9. In 1927, it became the Baldwin County Training School and the only black high school, serving grades 1-12. The new building was funded by the Rosenthal Foundation, a program to build schools for African American children. With integration in the 1960’s, it became Daphne Intermediate School. Today, the name of the intermediate school honors the prominent black educator, William J. Carroll. The white wood structure on the south east side of the current school was built in 1941 and 1942 by students as a vocational arts project. It was originally attached to the 1927 structure. Currently, it houses the Baldwin County Training School Heritage Fest Foundation and Black Education Museum. *Tours by appointment.*

51 612 Main Street: Shrine of the Holy Cross, c.1948, was originally built around a Quonset hut. It was started by Father Vincent Warren, a Josephite priest. It served as a mission for African-Americans in Baldwin County and included a school. His efforts to use faith as a tool for tolerance helped in the local transition to integration. It is currently a Jesuit administered parish church. The Knights of Columbus building adjoins the church.