




After NC 209 levels out in the **Spring Creek Valley** with the **Spring Creek** running on your left and the **Spring Creek Mountains** in the background, you will see on the left a rock **WPA-built school** which has been renovated to be the **Community Center**, featuring **local history**, a **library** and **Grits**, a locally owned restaurant with a varied menu including fried green tomatoes.

 **Side Trip: Max Patch!** *Worth another trip or more! There are 2 ways to Max Patch from NC 209. As NC 209 descends and is still curvy, watch for a brown Max Patch sign on your left. Turn right onto Meadowfork Road. Follow the Max Patch signs. You will turn right onto Little Creek. The other way has fewer miles from NC 209. After the road levels and straightens for the valley and shortly before you reach the Spring Creek Community Center, turn right off NC 209 onto Caldwell Mountain Road. (There will be a blue house with Burgundy roof and trim on your left.) Caldwell Mountain Road will end at Meadowfork Road. Turn right on Meadowfork. Little Creek will be on your left. Turn left onto Little Creek and follow the Max Patch signs. You will be traveling on a good gravel road. Max Patch is a 350-acre bald at 4,500 feet altitude with a 360 degree view overlooking mountains and valleys and crossed by the **Appalachian Trail**. It has the feel of *The Sound of Music's* "The Hills Are Alive!" You will have a short hike to the Patch from the parking lot below.*

*To get back to NC 209, retrace to Meadowfork Road, turn right, and then turn left onto Caldwell Mountain Road. Turn right on NC 209.*

NC 209 intersects NC 63 where you see the sign, **TrUSt**. Read "Trust Us". Keep right and visit the **Trust General Store** on the left. You'll find another local restaurant and a great variety of country store items along with a **history display** for the area. From the store, turn right on NC 209 to the intersection with NC 63 and then right on NC 63.

NC 63 rises over **Doggett Mountain**, the site of part of the annual 100 mile **Hot Doggett Bicycle Run**. The road is steep and curvy with beautiful views.

As NC 63 straightens and levels off, look for a **Pre-Civil War log cabin** on your right. As you pass Clark's Branch Road, you have a good view of the house and out buildings. **No Trespassing** is posted. Continue on NC 63 and see, on your left, the **Reeves Home Place**, a **pre-Civil War brick house** which has continued to be occupied. There is a green road sign marking the drive.


With the **Newfound Mountains** wrapping from the west to southwest, NC 63 crosses a bridge into Buncombe County and passes the **Reeves Grocery Store** on the right. Look for a red barn on your right and then a tobacco barn on your left. Make a sharp left turn onto Sandy Mush Road. When you cross the bridge, you are back in Madison County. When you come to a T intersection, continue on Sandy Mush to the right. At a second T intersection, turn left onto Meadowtown Road. You'll pass lots of pastures, fields and large barns.

Meadowtown Road will eventually become Bailey's Branch Road and descend with beautiful views of Marshall and the white bridge that crosses the French Broad River into Marshall.

Before you cross the river, there is an entrance on the left to **Blannahasset Island**, which was the site of the **old Marshall High School** and is now a favorite location for **artists' studios**.

To the right of the bridge, turn into a short road/parking lot to see the site of the **Capitola Cotton Mill**, open in the early 1900's. It is now owned by the Capitola Hydroelectric Plant and partially covered by metal. On its side you see **murals depicting factory work**.

After crossing the French Broad River, turn right in front of the Madison County Courthouse.

 **History:** *The brick building to the right of the Courthouse and now the State Employees Credit Union is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1903 on the **site of the first courthouse in Marshall and was occupied by the French Broad Bank until 1976**. Next door, the white house with 2 full front porches is the historic **Allen House**. It was Confederate Colonel Lawrence M. Allen's house that was raided in the Salt Raid that led to the **Shelton Laurel Massacre** during the Civil War.*

Continuing on 56 S. Main St. beside railroad tracks and the French Broad River, you will pass the old **Train Depot** and a red caboose on your right. The Depot is the site of **Friday night local music**. As you continue with the French Broad River on your right, you come to Hayes' Run. Turn left to wind your way up to US 25/70 or continue on the road going upstream beside the river toward Asheville.

*Madison County Visitors Center  
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## Driving Tour

# Madison County



*54-Mile West Side Loop*

 *Plus Side Trips*

## The Jewel of the Blue Ridge






Your tour begins at the **Madison County Courthouse** on Main Street in Marshall, called Lapland until it became the County Seat in 1858. The 1906 Neo-Classical brick building is the second courthouse built in Marshall and was designed by Richard Sharpe Smith. It is topped with a cupola containing 7 clocks and a lantern used as a pedestal for the blind justice statue. There are 2 historical markers of interest on the Courthouse lawn to the left: one for David Vance, Governor Zeb Vance's father, and one for the Buncombe Turnpike Road.

Pass the Courthouse and continue on Main Street (old US 25/70) uphill. Turn right onto Walnut Creek Drive and go through a residential area to intersect the new US 25/70. Turn left and continue through the areas of Walnut and Barnard. On your right where Upper Brush Creek intersects US 25/70 you will see the **Madison County Elementary School** and the **Madison County Middle School**.


After passing the Brush Creek intersection on US 25/70, look for the fire station on your left, then "Walnut" signs. There will be one on the right and one on the left at the Walnut Road.

 **History Side Trips:** Barnard on the French Broad River is an example of a location that was the stage for 3 different economic opportunities as times changed, and


Walnut, originally Jewell Hill, was the location of the first Madison County Court. To visit the 2 sites, turn left on Walnut Road. Go a short distance and turn right at the Barnard sign. Pull in at the old white Methodist Church building on the left. The building, now used for storage, was originally the Jewell Hill Methodist Church and was built over the foundation of the log building used for the earliest sessions of the Madison County Court when Walnut was **Jewell Hill**, the County Seat of Madison County from 1851 through 1858. This is also the location of the Bell Institute which was operated by the Presbyterian Church USA from 1897 to 1913. See the historical marker in front of the building.



Continue on Barnard Road to the French Broad River. Originally, this was a rest stop for the **drovers** who moved their herds of animals from Tennessee and Madison County to market in South Carolina on the **Buncombe Turnpike Road**. Later, **loggers** loaded **pulpwood** onto trains. If you go out on the bridge and look to your right, you see the remains of a building from the Buncombe Turnpike Road days. Across from the turnoff to the park at the river, you will see a brick store building left from the logging days with "Monte Love Gudger 1913" cut into the building front. The location fell into disuse after the demise of the logging companies until it became popular with **whitewater rafting** companies for access to the river.

 **Scenic View Side Trip:** If you continue across the bridge and turn right, you go to **Big Pine**, a picturesque area with well-kept farms and beautiful scenery. The more adventurous may want to continue across Troublesome Gap through the Spring Creek Mountains to NC 209 at Spring Creek. To continue your West Side Tour, retrace your route back to the white Methodist Church and turn left on Walnut Road to US 25/70. Turn left.

US 25/70 descends between the French Broad River to your left (but not close) and the **Walnut Mountains** on your right. It makes a turn to the west crossing the Laurel River which carries the waters from Shelton Laurel, Little Laurel, and Big Laurel Creeks. You are 5 miles from Hot Springs. The road rises and enters the **Pisgah National Forest**. There will be a point of access to the **Appalachian Trail** on your right as well as access to **Mill Ridge and Golden Ridge Bike Trails** just before you crest the hill and pass under the **Appalachian Trail**. US 25/70 curves southwest toward the French Broad River and Hot Springs. Just before US 25/70 crosses the French Broad River, you see River Road straight ahead. There is a historical marker for Painted Rock.

 **History Side Trip: Painted Rock** marks the path hunters followed from Tennessee and discovered warm mineral waters shortly after the Revolutionary War. Later a town, Warm Springs, would be called Hot Springs after a hotter spring had been found. Turn left on River Road at the Painted Rock historical marker and drive beside the French Broad River (part of the way on a good gravel road) to the edge of Tennessee to see the remarkable cliff. There is a good turning place before a sharp turn in the road at the rock and as you approach the pavement of Tennessee. Look for **Murray Branch**, a

**Pisgah National Forest Recreation Site** with a picnic area, barbecue pits, sheltered tables and public bathrooms between the river and the road midway back to US 25/70.

US 25/70 makes a left across the French Broad River and proceeds to **Hot Springs**. **Natural hot mineral springs!** Indoor hot tubs and therapy. Outdoor hot tubs next to the French Broad River. **Appalachian Trail** down Main Street. Camping. Hiking and whitewater rafting. Restaurants and lodging. History from the 1830's-1920's as a health resort and a popular vacation spot for the wealthy, and, during WWII, a Federal Government site of impoundment for German Officers.



Main Street in Hot Springs follows US 25/70 until it makes a sharp turn to the right. Leave US 25/70 and keep straight on NC 209. Look for the home of **Jane Gentry**, who provided many of the ballads for Cecil Sharpe's 1916 collection of ballads in the **Laurel area of Madison County**. It is located at the corner of Walnut Street and NC 209. There is a historical marker in front.

NC 209 rises through rocky bluffs and passes on the left **Rocky Bluff Campground**, where a 0.1 mile hike takes you to **Spencer's Overlook**. (See cover photo.) There are 2 longer trails. Enjoy the scenic overlooks as you continue on NC 209.