

Heritage Map Design and Cultural Tourism: Real World Problem-Solving in Marion County, GA

Grant Report Spring 2016

Participants:

Dr. Amanda Rees and 15 Cultural Geography (GEOG 3108) students: David Buxton, Dustin Colman, Skyler Corbin, Trelle Cotton, Paula Crawford-Corrick, Chandler Garrett, Stephen Graziano, Mia Harris, Shayna Hayworth, Lexus Houston, Jasmine Kindred, Bertram Melix, Christopher O’Pry, Erin Wenzel, and Alisa Williams.

Professor Chuck Lawson and 8 Graphic Design and Typography (ART 2021) students: Taylor Bardon, Erin Bozone, Ashley Burgess, Diamond Gass, Shelbi Guyton, Shaheed Muhammed, Kiki McNeil and McKenzie Wilkes.



Cultural Geography and Graphic Design students together at Pasaquan, February 13, 2016

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Interdisciplinary Project Overview

With the soft opening of Pasaquan, Marion County’s visionary art environment, in summer 2016, and its grand opening by Columbus State University in fall 2016, the Marion County Chamber of Commerce requested that the *Columbus Community Geography Center* partner to develop a heritage tour map of the county for welcome centers across the state. This small rural county of 8,700 residences, 60% white, 30% black and 7.5% Hispanic. One fifth of the population live below the poverty level. It recently lost several hundred jobs with the closure of the local chicken processing plant. Plans to launch a tourism program are understood to be of great importance to the community.



The heritage map will be designed to be displayed in a tourism materials rack.

CSU’s Dr. Amanda Rees, Professor of Geography, and Professor Chuck Lawson, Department of Art, College of the Arts joined forces to create a heritage tour map of Buena Vista and Marion County.



Student Erin Wenzel working with community members at the heritage workshop, February 13, 2016.

Geography students ran a community workshop to identify twenty-one county and city heritage sites for inclusion. They researched and wrote short descriptions for the map and extended histories for an accompanying web page to be accessed from the map with a QR code. Students also produced an accurate map of each site and the major roads and other primary physical features of the county and city.

Graphic design students then received the map text and GIS maps of the county and the city. Students designed three “roughs” of the map for external review. The first review included Marion County leaders, state tourism representatives, and several faculty in art, GIS and geography. The roughs were then refined and presented again to a group of reviewers.

This project proved to be a good fit for CSU’s QEP “Real World Problems Solving” project in its testing phase in spring 2016. This interdisciplinary “service learning” project offered high impact educational practices, fieldwork, student-led heritage

workshop in Marion County, critical feedback from community members on writing, and design. This interdisciplinary project was aligned with CSU’s mission to support alternative pedagogical approaches to address the needs of millennial learners.

1. Discover

The process of discovering our “real world” problem had several phases as discovery never happens at once time. The following discovery process informed our classes:

1. Marion County Chamber of Commerce Director, Debby Ford visited the Cultural Geography classroom along with the chair of the county’s Tourism Committee Ginger Swint. Our visitors talked about the economic and cultural challenges their community faced in recognizing the heritage resources within the community as a possible economic ing, their focus on a plan to develop tourism in the county, and how a heritage tour map was the first step in their tourism plan.
2. Both classes read the state tourism committee’s report on Tourism in Marion County that identified the need for heritage tourism, and the audience for the heritage tourism map.
3. Cultural geography students also welcomed the regional director of the Presidential Pathways tourism program and several state welcome center managers to talk about the role of heritage maps and shared several examples of maps for review.
4. Both classes took a day-long field trip to Marion County. In the morning Ginger Swint a lifelong resident of the community took the students on a tour of some of the major county sites likely to be on the heritage map.

2. Design

The design process involved developing sense of the audience, how to effectively engage with the audience, and critical feedback on the content (visual and textual) that asked each class to respond and modify content.

1. Both Graphic Design and Cultural Geography students read the county tourism report that identified the map’s primary audience (demographics): heritage tourists, decision-making by mid 20s to mid 40s women, high levels of tertiary education, a desire for *authenticity*.
<http://www.marketgeorgia.org/master/files/resources/582/GDEcD%20Tourism%20Resource%20Team%20Report%20-%20Marion%20County%20-%202014.pdf>
2. Through in-class discussion with visiting community leaders, students also learned that there was a second audience, internal to the county, who would be educated by the map about their own cultural resources.
3. Georgia Department of Economic Development’s tourism specialists met with students to talk about effective tourism map development, information for where maps will be placed in the state, and how to consider the primary audience. The same specialists were also part of the review team of both the

“roughs” (when graphic design students first presented designs) and in the review of the final submissions.

4. Text was assessed by community representatives separately from the design.
5. Students helped to create an innovative method of holding public history workshops. Using maps to focus on community member’s sense of locations that were important to the county’s heritage, students were able to identify a series of major sites to be included in the process.

3. Deliver

- Graphic design students pitched their three designed twice to a panel of reviewers (community leaders, Georgia tourism representatives, art and geography faculty). The graphic design students listened and then responded to the panel’s comments.
- Cultural Geography students text for the map and the extended web page for each heritage site was shared with county leaders and the editing process lasted 4-5 weeks.

4. Reflection

- Students reflected on the process using the QEP assignment.
- Cultural geography students prepared a large, final paper reflecting on the process and impact on their professional and personal lives.
- Both classes prepared a final one-two sentence reflection to share in a video of the process. These reflections were used to assess themes connected to impact.

5. Response

- When designing a Real-World Problem solving project there is perhaps one more step to the process that we use in Community Geography and in Graphic Design: presenting the project to the community partner/client and sharing the response to the project.
- While the Graphic Design students were able to share their prototypes and final submissions with the jury for review and receive feedback, the Cultural Geography students were only able to meet with the community partners early on in the process. They did receive written feedback in the form of editorial comments electronically. So, the Director of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce Debby Ford sent a letter letting students responding to their work, and placing it in the larger context of the tourism plan for the county. She also extended an invitation to the Pasaquan open house in fall 2016.

Marion County Georgia Chamber of Commerce



Debby Ford, President
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12 May 2016

Dear Cultural Geography Students,

WOW! How do I begin to say thank you for all you have done to make "our" Buena Vista/Marion County Heritage Map a reality? The following is an attempt to do so. Excuse the length. I can't do this any other way.

To say the least, Pasaquan is going to be a major domestic and international point of interest for our entire region and state. It is already drawing many who want to highlight the site. These include, but are not limited to, travel writers from across the US. In addition, an individual from the USDA, Washington, DC called and requested a tour Pasaquan and Buena Vista. His job is to assist rural communities use their resources to enhance and improve the economic development of the area. As I talk with all these people, I ALWAYS mention you, Dr. Rees, CSU, and your major contributions.

Your work and product are without a doubt, amazing! February 13th, our Heritage Mapping Day, was a very important day for many reasons. Your presence made this project 'real' for our residents. It prompted great excitement and interest. I am asked quite often, "How is the CSU students' map coming along?" That renewed interest and encouragement has been important in this process of preparing for tourism.

Although we have not gone to press yet, we are quickly approaching that day, thanks to you and Dr. Rees. With the assistance and advice of the state tourism leaders, we have developed a plan for use of the map. This includes placing copies at all Georgia Visitor Information Centers throughout the state. In addition, we are already having local visitor centers/tourism sites (Americus, Columbus, LaGrange for a few examples) asking for maps and rack cards. Of course, we will use and distribute the map through our local visitor/information center. The map will also be included in mailings and will be a part of our new website that is almost ready.

As you can see, the impact YOU are making on our area with this map/website is incomprehensible. You will always have a special place in this process and your work will be recorded as a part of this process.

Please place October 22, 2016 on your calendar—Opening Day of Pasaquan. This is my personal invitation for you to attend. Your presence will mean a great deal. We will forward the official invitation to you via Dr. Rees.

Again, thank you. You are making history! I wish you the very best and am so proud of each of you for furthering your education and preparing for the next phase of your lives. You are making a difference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah H. Ford".

Deborah Hagler Ford, President
Marion County, Georgia Chamber of Commerce

"Together... For the Future"

Chamber Office: P.O. Box 471 - Buena Vista, GA 31803 - Phone/Fax: 229-649-2842
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Student Outcomes

At the end of the course we asked students in both courses to summarize their project experience in written form to be shared in a short video about the process. Their responses fell into six themes, with several responses reflecting more than one theme.

1. Exercising Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills
2. Community, Connection, and Belonging
3. Discovery Process
4. Engaging Multiple Perspectives
5. Team Work
6. Real World Experience

Outcome Themes	Text of Student Responses and Class Designation	Summary
Exercising Disciplinary Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>I enjoyed being involved in the research project. It was great to meet and with the people of Marion County. I believe this project <u>helped enhanced my ability to research and interpret history</u> from a different perspective. Cultural Geography</i> 2. <i>Learning about the local history and culture of Marion County was eye-opening. So much can be found in this small town, and <u>it was a pleasure looking for all of its history.</u> Cultural Geography</i> 3. <i>This project was very informative on the history of Marion County. <u>Researching Bessie Harvey</u> really opened my eyes to the more artistic values, and the type of people who come out of Marion County. Cultural Geography</i> 4. <i><u>This project has helped develop me as a professional and a historian</u> and has introduced me to the rich heritage of Marion County. Cultural Geography</i> 5. <i>The process has been a new experience for me as well as other classmates. Being able to work with a community instead of just working on a class project was an amazing experience. I love knowing that we helped make a difference for a community as well as <u>sharpen our own skills in the process.</u> Graphic Design.</i> 	<p>Students recognized both the challenges and pleasures of conducting history in rural communities and the challenge of identify resources. They</p>
Community,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Working on the Marion County Heritage Tourism project has given me a better</i> 	<p>Students experienced</p>

<p>Connection and Belonging</p>	<p><i>understanding of community and has helped to personally connect me to the space that I am in. Cultural Geography</i></p> <p>2. <i>I believe this map built a strong sense of community not just in Marion County but also among ourselves as peer as we endeavored to bring this project together. Cultural Geography</i></p> <p>3. <i>Understanding the involvement of people and culture in the South. Determining a sense of belonging. Cultural Geography</i></p> <p>4. <i>The process was a long, but good one. It was an amazing experience to work with people from all walks of life. It was also good to see how passionate the people of the town were about their city. Making a map was a tedious project, but also a learning experience to create something so special for a town with a big heart. Graphic Design</i></p>	<p>a strong connection to place through this project. They recognized a sense of community in Marion County while they also recognized a sense of community in their own teams. One student reflected on the relationship between regional culture and a sense of belonging while another identified the community partner as big hearted.</p>
<p>Discovery Process</p>	<p>1. <i>The most frustrating part of the process was discovering great “facts” that completely contradict each other, but investigating further and discovering the truth made it all worth it. Cultural Geography</i></p> <p>2. <i>After meeting with the Marion County community and receiving first hand history, it <u>provided a clear vision of what extended research that we needed to conduct in order to make the project a success.</u> Cultural Geography</i></p> <p>3. <i>The <u>process has been difficult</u> but well worth it. <u>Getting information about the Big Chief Grist mill was nowhere on the internet. Once contacting the owners, we were able to get the background from the owners and how the Grist Mill came to be.</u> Cultural Geography</i></p>	<p>Students recognized their own frustrations with the discovery process. As students who have not conducted history research this was often the cultural geography students’ first experience of research. In engaging with community members, they also were challenged to consider if particular sites merited inclusion.</p>

<p>Engaging Multiple Perspectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>I enjoyed being involved in the research project. It was great to meet and with the people of Marion County. I believe this project helped enhanced my ability to research and interpret history from a <u>different perspective</u>. Cultural Geography</i> 2. <i>Through this process we left with a revitalized point of view for the future work that we construct. From this project we have learned to <u>inspect all points of view and interpret hidden narratives</u>. Cultural Geography</i> 3. <i>I enjoyed learning about local lore as well as <u>history from a citizen's perspective</u> in Marion County. Cultural Geography</i> 4. <i>This project was very informative on the history of Marion County. Researching Bessie Harvey really <u>opened my eyes to the more artistic values, and the type of people who come out of Marion County</u>. Cultural Geography</i> 	<p>Students responded to the challenges of judging various sources of information for historical merit as well as engaging with community members about their interest in local history. Indeed, one student has chosen to follow a career into public history in part as a result of this class.</p>
<p>Team Work</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>I have enjoyed <u>working with my peers</u> to create this content, intended to highlight the culturally relevant and unique sites of Marion County. Cultural Geography</i> 2. <i>This process has been difficult but worth the journey. The <u>team worked involved in this project helps to create an enjoyable atmosphere</u> in the classroom. Cultural Geography</i> 3. <i>The process of working on the Marion County Heritage Map has <u>taught me how to work as a team with clients in order to create a successful finished product</u>. Graphic Design</i> 	<p>Both classes were organized into teams and the various reflections on teamwork responded to that organization creating an enjoyable experience and the importance of the team work experience in professionalizing students.</p>
<p>Real World Experience</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>This project allowed <u>real world experience</u> that is not usually found in a college course. We got to impact a part of Georgia and learn about the cultural heritage of Marion County. Graphic Design</i> 	<p>Several students reflected on the real world experience provided in the</p>

	<p>2. The process has been a new experience for me as well as other classmates. <u>Being able to work with a community</u> instead of just working on a class project <u>was an amazing experience</u>. I love knowing that we helped make a difference for a community as well as sharpen our own skills in the process. <i>Graphic Design</i></p>	<p>classes. Note: both classes piloted CSU's QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) "Real World Problem-Solving" and this reflection seems to mirror this assignment.</p>
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Faculty Benefits

Chuck Lawson

- Working with Dr. Rees on this difficult, yet rewarding project was invigorating. Her experience in the field of geography and cultural heritage was extremely useful. Her connection with the various constituencies (Marion County leadership and Georgia Tourism folks) was another important aspect of the project. Her class was jovial, timely and focused. Dr. Rees also had superior skills in bringing together other colleagues with expertise in these fields.
- Most important to this entire process was that my students gained knowledge in critical thinking and real world problem solving. They had to work with mapping and cartography and had no prior experience. Two of the three groups used Ortellius software that was specifically purchased for this project. I found the students to be autodidactic when problems of software were concerned.
- This project was difficult. The experience echoes that of collaborative work and dealing with a large client base and many avenues of input. I truly believe that these students are better prepared to deal with actual clients after this immersive experience.

Amanda Rees

- I have found a great, patient colleague in Chuck Lawson. He is committed to supporting his students in creating engaging visual representations. Geography is ultimately a very visual discipline, from looking at the cultural landscape and working to interpret space in a creative manner for the tourists (the focus of our class) to the art of cartography. Working with Chuck has allowed me and my students to produce a very professional looking and engaging map for our community partners. It has certainly enriched my student's experience as they saw the evolution of a publishable map with their text content.

- The class developed a new method of engaging community members in identifying important heritage sites and this will form the basis of one of the cultural geography student's conference posters in fall 2016.
- The theme of authenticity shaped a lot of the student's work and it was exciting to explore this theme as it is presently impacting a book-length manuscript I'm writing on tourism.
- If I was planning this again I would make sure that Chuck's and my classes overlapped as it would have been profitable to have students meet directly at several points in the process. Instead Chuck and I visited each other's classes to give updates, provide feedback and give input into each other's parts of the project.

EXPLORING MARION COUNTY

Warm Springs
46 Miles

Originally used as a trading route by indigenous peoples, the **Old Federal Road** evolved into a transportation route between Milledgeville, GA and New Orleans before being superseded by the railroad.



Constructed in 1813, **Fort Perry** (a small supply post) was an 8-pointed wooden fort that protected and defended the Old Federal Road.



HERITAGE SITES

- 1 Buena Vista Town Square
- 2 William Bartram Trail Historical Marker
- 3 Old Federal Road Historical Marker
- 4 Fort Perry Historical Marker
- 5 Tazewell Courthouse
- 6 Oochee Bottom Bridge
- 7 Pineville Baptist Cemetery
- 8 Big Chief Grist Mill
- 9 Shiloh Baptist Church/Cemetery
- 10 Gypsy Camp Grist Mill
- 11 Pasaquan

In 1774, botanist **William Bartram** battled the stifling heat and humidity of a Georgia July to observe the indigenous plants, animals, and peoples of the region that would become Marion County.



A welcoming visionary arts environment, **Pasaquan** was built over a 30-year period by St. EOM. The house and ground embody his vivid utopia.



Moved in 1930 and powered by electricity, **Gypsy Camp Grist Mill** ground corn until the 1960s. Close by, Romany people camped during many winters in the first half of the twentieth century.



Initially built in 1838, the **Tazewell Courthouse** was rebuilt after an 1845 fire. Since 1848 this antebellum structure has been home to a Masonic Lodge.



According to local lore, **Oochee Bottom** served as a hunting ground where Yuchi peoples gathered food and harvested deer pelts for trade.



Draped in Spanish moss, **Pineville** was an early community in the county. It's cemetery laid to rest inhabitants as early as the 1840s.



Established in 1827, within twenty years Marion County's population had grown to over 10,000 as cotton quickly dominated the plantation economy. After the Civil War, the county faced agricultural and economic challenges. As cotton production waned, while forestry grew in prominence, **Buena Vista's Courthouse Square** marks the center of the county and the beginning of our tour.



Columbus
33 Miles

Macon
73 Miles

Andersonville
26 Miles

Richland
22 Miles

Plains
23 Miles

Located on a peaceful mill pond, the water-powered **Big Chief Grist Mill** ground corn into meal for local farmers from the nineteenth century onwards. It was owned by three generations of the Upton family.



Shiloh-Marion Baptist Church and Cemetery represents one of the last remnants of the Church Hill community. Established in 1835, it features a simple wooden clapboard building, and the graves of former slaves and Native Americans.



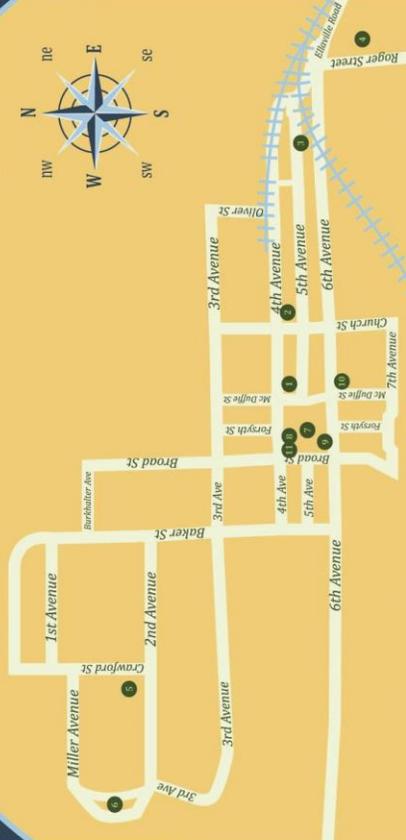
Exploring The Past



From the Colonial Period to the twenty-first century, our history has included writers, artists, poets, and sportsmen who have made their innovative marks, often through adversity, well beyond our county's borders.



EXPLORING BUENA VISTA



HERITAGE SITES

- Stevens Cotton Warehouse**
Built in 1920 by R.W. Stevens, this warehouse stored ginned and baled cotton. It was the largest of its kind in the South. Construction began during a period of cotton crop devastation by the boll weevil and the beginning of a national agricultural depression.
- Dranes-Stevens House**
An excellent example of neoclassical architecture, the Dranes-Stevens House was built in 1891. It is noted for its elaborate interior woodwork.
- Alfred and Jane Ables House**
Born into slavery in 1865, by the 1880s Alfred Ables was a highly successful businessman who, at his death, donated land for an African-American center now stands. Built in 1892, the Alfred and Jane Ables House is an example of a New South cottage.
- Josh Gibson Center**
Josh Gibson, born in 1911 and known as the "Black Babe Ruth", was the son of sharecroppers who subsequently moved to the city of Birmingham. He became a baseball player in the Negro League and was posthumously inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. This center was named in honor of the community's most famous son.
- Short-Stevens House**
The Short-Stevens House is framed by towering magnolia trees and four two-story columns. Built in the early twentieth century, it is distinguished by its grand scale, original mantels and mid-century features.
- Thaddeus Oliver Marker**
A young teacher, poet, and world-famous lawyer, Thaddeus Oliver arrived in Buena Vista in 1850. Thought by some to have been the first African American to be "born tonight," he died a Confederate captain in 1864.
- Buena Vista Courthouse**
Built in 1850, it was renovated and received its terrastyle facade, which includes four large columns supporting a pediment decorated with a golden eagle.
- Ramah Primitive Baptist Church**
This unadorned place of worship was added to the outer walls. Ramah Primitive Baptist Church's most eccentric member was Eddie Owens Martin (St. EOM), who is buried in its cemetery.
- Luether H Story Marker**
Medal of Honor recipient Luether Story died in 1950 at the age of 19 while defending his fellow soldiers in the Korean War.
- Farmers & Merchants Warehouse**
Built in 1920, Farmers and Merchants Cotton Warehouse included both a walk-in safe and a sprinkler system to protect the cotton. By 1925, the cotton industry declined as synthetic fabrics became popular.
- Snow Wall**
"Snowed Saturday night, Feb. 10, 1934." Snowfall is considered a novelty in the Deep South; writings on this wall are a display of local pride.

From William Bartram's lyrical botanical notebook at the eve of the Revolutionary War to the Civil War poetry of Thaddeus Oliver, this community has witnessed creativity. In the twentieth century, the county birthed the baseball player Josh Gibson and the visionary arts environment of St. EOM's Pasaquan, while offering a way station in the life of renowned folk artist Bessie Harvey. From our antebellum architecture to our agricultural heritage, let Marion County inspire you.



Josh Gibson, 1935.
Image courtesy Arthur K. Miller



For more history on each heritage site follow the QR Code

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From the faculty and students in both Cultural Geography and Graphic Design, our sincere thanks go to:

They say it takes a village to raise a child, reflecting on this list it seems that it takes a broad community to produce a creative and engaging heritage tour map.

- Debby Ford, Chair of the Marion County Chamber of Commerce and Ginger Swint, chair of the county's Tourism Board for introducing us to the county's rich heritage and encouraging so many residents to join our workshop.
- The twenty Marion County community members who took part in the heritage workshop and in separate conversations with Mike Dillard, Laverne Powell, and C. Murray, and Cathy and Fred Fussell.
- Mike Bunn for sharing his extensive local history knowledge.
- Holly Winner, Presidential Pathways director and all the visitor center personnel for their help in understanding how brochures work and helping to think about designing eye-catching imagery.
- Drs. Sarah Bowman, Virginia Causey, John Ellisor, and Ilaria Scaglia for editing our map.
- Professor Mike McFalls for helping to support the map critique
- Dr. Brad Huff for his cartographic critic and GIS support.
- David Rush for generously sharing his images and collecting GPS data for our Marion County heritage sites.
- Dr. Susan Hrach and the Center for Teaching and Learning for establishing interdisciplinary grants and funding our project.