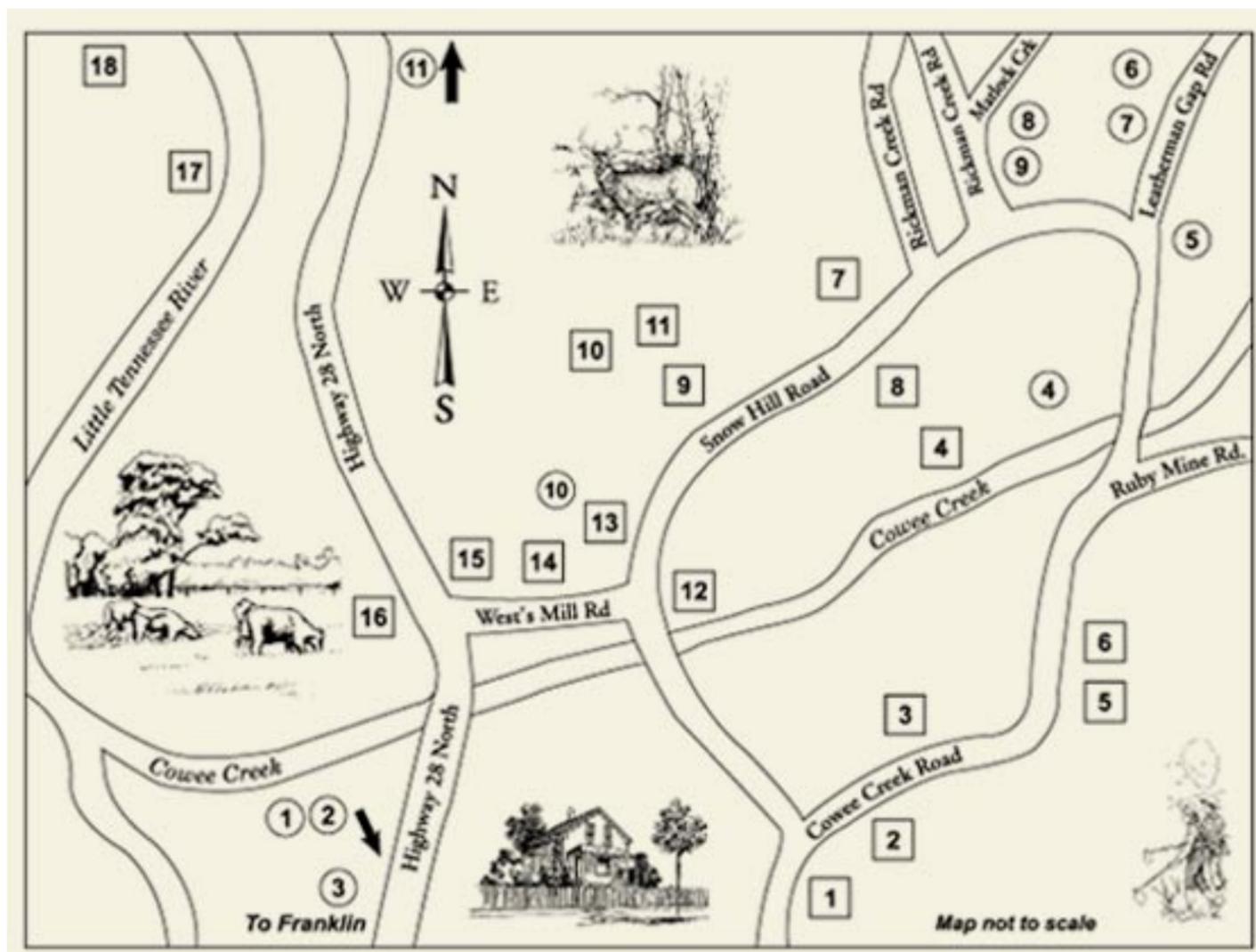


# Cowee~West's Mill Historic District

## Self-Guided Driving Tour



### Area Businesses

- ① Great Smokey Mtn. Fish Camp
- ② Mason Mountain Mine
- ③ Cowee Convenience Center
- ④ Sheffield Mine
- ⑤ Perry's Water Garden
- ⑥ Cowee Trout Pond
- ⑦ Sleepy Hollow Mtn. Cabins
- ⑧ T & B Blueberries
- ⑨ Cowee Harmony Gardens
- ⑩ Country Home Co-op
- ⑪ U-Pick Veggies

## Historic Buildings and Sites

① **Cowee Elementary School** (1943) This Art Deco-inspired, native stone school building was constructed by the Works Progress Administration. A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp had been located on this site in 1933; the major work of the Corps was to extend Leatherman Gap Road all the way to Cowee Bald, where a fire tower was constructed.

② **T.R. Rickman Store** (ca. 1895) Originally built by John Hall in 1895, Thomas Rickman bought the store in 1925 and operated it until his death in 1994. Many of the original fixtures are still in place, including chestnut paneling upstairs.

③ **T.C. Bryson House** (ca. 1871) Original house is the rear ell; 2-story addition was added in the early 1900s. Old lace tablecloths were found under layers of wallpaper, presumably used as insulation.

④ **Frank & Leo Gibson Farm** (1925) This home is encircled by Cowee Creek and has beautiful views of the valley. The numerous outbuildings indicate the diverse activities of this bustling farm, which, thanks to the falling waters of the bold creek, was the first in the valley to have electricity.

⑤ **James & Emmeline Bryson Farm** (1863) This home is the oldest in the Historic District and has changed very little in character over the years. The original doors, floors, mantels, and other woodwork are still in place. The family inhabited this house continuously until Mrs. Frances Bryson's death in 2004.

⑥ **John & Ada Gibson Dalton House** (1927) John & Ada Dalton purchased this land from Emmeline Bryson's parents, the Thomas Shepherds, who were one of the first families to settle in the area. The Daltons' granddaughter, Josephine Dalton Corbin, recalls well-attended Sunday gospel sings on the front porch that filled the valley with the sound of music.

⑦ **Pleasant Hill Church and Cemetery** (1929) This simple building was once the worship place of a thriving African-American community. The Pleasant Hill congregation purchased the land in 1871 and it is believed that a log church served until the present building was erected in 1929. The last member of the congregation, Escmoe Howell, was buried in the cemetery in 1987.

⑧ **Old Cowee School / Snow Hill Inn** (1914) Built on the site of an 1887 school that burned, this formal two-story structure served the families of the area until 1943, when the consolidation of several rural schools resulted in the construction of the current Cowee Elementary School. The unusual stone bell tower also functioned as the school's spring house. Since 1991, this building has operated as the Snow Hill Inn.

⑨ **Snow Hill Methodist Church** (1929) This building replaces an 1876 church that stood near the center of the present cemetery. It was snowing the day the earlier church was dedicated, so the congregation, which had formed in 1833, named it Snow Hill. Also on this site was the Peabody School, built in 1875. It was considered to be one of the best schools in the area and students from all over boarded with local families until the school closed in 1897.

⑩ **Jessie & Pallie West House** (Early 1800s) This imposing, sixteen-room house is accessed by the drive to Snow Hill Church. The original one-story log home was constructed in the first half of the 1800s; the two-story addition was connected to the original in the 1880s. The original oak floors, beaded-board walls, doors, mantels, and stairway are still in place.

⑪ **Clara West Owens House** (ca. 1936) This house on the Jessie & Pallie West property was built by their daughter Clara, who was appointed postmaster of West's Mill in 1950. An unusual corner fireplace is the most notable interior feature of this modest house.

⑫ **Will Morrison House** (1880s) This house was built by a descendant of William Morrison, one of the early white settlers of the area. A large dry-goods store, which was torn down in the 1930s, stood near the banks of Cowee Creek. An old road up Cowee Valley is still visible along the north side of the creek.

⑬ **Aunt Vonnie West House/Country Home Co-op** (1936) The daughter of Jessie and Pallie West, "Aunt" Vonnie was a schoolteacher in the Cowee schools for fifty years. The West's Mill post office was originally on this site but was rolled on logs to the west to make room for her house.

⑭ **West's Mill Post Office** (ca. 1925) This small, one-story building contained the post office and a dentist's office. Around 1935, Pallie West, who was postmaster at the time, had the building moved a short distance. Her daughter Clara was postmaster until the post office closed in the 1950s, after home delivery began.

⑮ **C.N. West General Merchandise** (1927) Constructed with materials from the original West Brothers' Store that stood across Hwy. 28, this large building, along with the grist mill and the post office, formed the heart of the village. The original floors, counters, and shelves are still intact and in excellent condition.

⑯ **Will West House** (1880s) The large grist mill for which the community was named stood near this house, as did the original West Brothers' Store. Also on this site was a coffin-making shop operated by Judd Potts.

⑰ **Cowee Mound** (ca. 600 A.D.) This prehistoric mound was, for many years, the heart of a large Cherokee village. A council house stood on top of the mound until it was burned in 1776.

⑱ **Euchella Site** (1819) Reserve established by Cherokee native Euchella but later purchased by Joseph Welch in a state land sale. Euchella moved his family to the Nantahala River.