

Blu Rose Art Bistro

When we think of steak, we likely imagine expensive restaurants and special occasions, but that wasn't always the case. Did you know that you used to be able to get an entire meal with steak, French fries, and salad for only \$2.50 right here in Douglasville? That \$2.50 meal was available for purchase at the building housing Blu Rose Art Bistro, formerly known as the Confederate Inn.

I'm Steve Jones from Community Relations and I'm here with Rylee Govoreau from the Conference Center and Tourism Department. We have a lot more history to share with you on our Audio Tour, so stay tuned while we tell you more on your tour to Discover Douglasville.

Let's begin with some history on the construction of the building. The date of when the building was built can be confusing since it was abandoned in 1887 and then torn down in 1901. But the area that the building now stands is a vital part of Douglasville history.

Steve: Hey Rylee, did you know that Douglasville was once known by a different name?

Rylee: Wait, really? What was it named?

Steve: Well, this is the area where the Skint Chestnut once stood - the land marker that made Douglasville, Douglasville. Before the City of Douglasville had its name, it was known as Skint Chestnut. Creek Indians that lived in this area skinned the Chestnut tree as a land marker, thus resulting in the name "Skint Chesnut". In fact, the American Chestnut was once considered one of the most important native trees in America. However, in recent years, the American Chestnut has despaired because of different diseases that affect the tree.

Rylee: Wow, I didn't know that. That's really interesting.

Steve: I think so too! I have more to share. Let's fast forward to 1952 to the opening of the Confederate Inn restaurant just two years prior to the Civil Rights Movement. When dining at the Blu Rose Art Bistro now, few would know that at one time this building held a restaurant that pointed back to a time when America was divided.

Rylee: Wait a minute...why would a restaurant call itself Confederate Inn when the Civil War ended almost a hundred years before its doors opened?

Steve: Great question, Rylee. Well, for many, the opening of this restaurant was a way to show pride for the confederate soldiers from the area that died during the war. This confederate pride could also be seen in the fact that at one time, the Courthouse had a Confederate monument from 1914 to 2019. Like much of the current news surrounding Confederate monuments in the United States, residents insisted that the Confederate monuments be taken down as they incited racial strife.

Although the former name for this restaurant would make people think this area was full of Confederate supporters, that is not actually true.

Steve: Did you know that Douglas County was not even Douglas County when the Civil War started? This area was known at the time as Campbell County. Campbell County township spanned from parts of Cobb, Douglas, and even parts of Fulton County. With vast land mass, there were divisions over what side people were on when it came to the many issues of slavery that defined the Civil War. There were Union supporters amidst the Confederate States of America supporters, all of whom lived within Campbell County.

Rylee: Wow, that's interesting. Are there any famous stories from when the area was still considered Campbell County?

Steve: Actually, yes! Have you ever been to Sweetwater Creek State Park?

Rylee: Yes, I love it there!

Steve: Well, one of Campbell County's most famous stories as it relates to the Civil War is about Manchester Mill, whose ruins are located at Sweetwater Creek State Park, the most visited State Park in Georgia. This five-story Mill produced all types of products, including cotton, lumber, and tobacco. When the Civil War broke out, the Mill began to make Confederate clothing. As a result of their allegiance to the Confederacy, the Mill had a target on their backs for those who supported the Union. This target became even bigger once Sherman made his fiery march through Georgia. Union troops burned down the Mill, captured the workers, and sent them away to different parts of Union states. Many of the workers never made it back to Douglas County.

Rylee: Wow I had no idea one building could be connected to so much history! Is there more?

Steve: Yes, there's more. That's not all! Did you know that where Blu Rose Bistro stands today there was once a saloon?

(Rylee says) What?! A Saloon? Aren't those only in westerns movies?

Steve: Not quite. The saloon hall's name is unknown, but it was at one point owned by G.R. Turner. The saloon first opened its doors in 1877 but just 8 years later the doors were forced to close because of the Prohibition Act of 1885. Now, the history of alcohol and Georgia goes way back and could likely be an audio tour on its own because Georgia went back and forth between being a dry or wet state. By 1885, the southern temperance started to push local government laws way before the Prohibition of the 1920's requiring all of America to be dry.

Rylee: Wow, Steve. That was all really interesting. I learned a lot about not only the history of the building, but about Douglasville in general. Next time I eat or listen to live music at Blu Rose Art Bistro, I will remember just how far Douglasville has come.

Steve: There's a lot of rich history in this area and more to still learn, so if you haven't listened to the whole Audio Tour yet, stay tuned and head to the next stop!