



VISIT LOCAL 2023 SCAVENGER HUNT

DOWNTOWN Hidden Gems

[Questions? Contact Sally at 828-883-3700 or info@brevardncchamber.org]

- 1. FIND IT! The William Breese House.** This Neo-Classical Revival styled house, known as the William Breese, Jr. House in the National Register of Historic Places, was built in 1902 on a two and a half-acre lot by Virginia widow Mrs. Martha A.E. Woodbridge of Richmond, Virginia. She lived there with her daughter Rebecca and son-in-law William Breese, Jr. Breese was a prominent lawyer and active in public affairs. His illustrious career included two terms as Mayor of Brevard and one term as a State Senator. He and Rebecca raised their children in the Neoclassical Revival style house, and it was officially deeded to them in 1920. In 1940, the building was sold and for many years served as the Colonial Inn. The current owners, Howard and Faye Yager, purchased the structure in the late 1990s, and it became the Inn at Brevard. **Can you find the William Breese, Jr, House?**
- 2. FIND IT! Speakeasy Door.** The building on the north side of West Main St., where Plummer Department Store was located for most of its existence, was built in 1912 by Shipman, McMinn, and Weilt on the site of the old McMinn house. The building also had a large auditorium, officially named “The New Auditorium,” on the second floor, with space for a stage. Entertainment, consisting of “first-class shows” or “first-class moving pictures,” was offered every night throughout the summer. Rumor has it that during prohibition, boxing matches were held in the space and alcohol could be enjoyed there at a “speakeasy.” Access was granted only to a predetermined clientele, who entered through the Red Door at the back of the building. It is said that the stairs to the red door were in essence a fire escape. When there was word that the police were planning to raid the speakeasy, owners would raise the stairs so that law enforcement could not enter. **Can you find the red speakeasy door behind and above what is now Mayberry’s? [HINT: Check out the alley between Hunters and Gatherers and Highland Books.]**
- 3. FIND IT! Historic Buildings in Times Arcade Alley.** This little alley located between Broad and Caldwell streets and connecting Main and Jordan streets, has some interesting history. The Lawrence Building, on the southwest corner of the alley fronting Jordan Street, was built in 1927 to Government specifications as a United States Post Office. Previously, the Brevard Post office had been housed in buildings used for other purposes, including Moore's Boarding House on Probart Street, which would later be known as the Red House. Directly across the alley is the Times Arcade Building, which once was home to the local newspaper. The first newspaper was printed in 1887 as the Transylvania Pioneer. Under various owners, it had various names, including the French Broad Hustler (!), the Sylvan Valley News and the Brevard News. In 1931, it was bought by Charles Douglas and became the Transylvania Times. Rumor has it that local ruffians once tossed the printing presses out the second-floor window into the alley. The paper is still in existence, publishing paper editions twice a week. **Can you find historic buildings in the Times Arcade Alley?**

4. FIND IT! Clemson Plaza. While moving pictures made their debut in Brevard around 1907, there were no “official” movie theaters. Movies were shown at different venues including the Courthouse, the second floor of the McMinn building and the third floor of the Aethelwold hotel, to name a few. They were all silent films as “talkies” weren’t invented until 1927. In 1929, brothers Ted and Vern Clement opened (on the corner of Main at Caldwell) the first theater in town where patrons could enjoy talking films. The theater was named for Ted and Vern’s father and themselves – “Clem” (from Clement) “-son” (and sons). The Clemson Theater operated until 1956, and the owners at that time sold the building to the City of Brevard in 1980. While there were efforts to renovate the building, it was not practical. The building was demolished, and today folks can enjoy the newly constructed Clemson Plaza. **Can you find Clemson Plaza?**

5. FIND IT! Original Fire Station/City Hall. The Brevard Fire Department started in 1898 with its primary piece of equipment being a pushcart. Over time there were changes made and now imagine seeing a big yellow brick building, with red accents, a tall bay door, and large glass windows. Such was the look of the original Brevard Fire Station at 114 W. Main in 1926. It was built by Robert Kilpatrick and served as both a fire department and city offices. The fire department’s two main goals were fire prevention and suppression. They developed a fire station that showed leadership throughout the generations. On April 1, 1926, the newspaper headline was “Praise Due Brevard Fire Department,” because of the department’s impressive nine-minute response to a fire at the Appalachian Hotel. This was so impressive, because they were volunteer fire fighters and were at home asleep when they received the call. The Brevard Fire Department still holds true to their leadership and fire prevention. Nowadays, the original fire department building is a coffee lounge, where you can see artifacts from the original fire station. **Can you find the Original Fire Department?**

6. FIND IT! The Red House. FIND IT! The Red House. The structure, the first building in Brevard, was built on what is now 266 Probart Street around 1851 by Leander S. Gash as a general store. The street was originally called Poor Street after W.P. Poor, who managed the store. Poor Street was one of the most desirable stretches in Brevard, because it had a lot of land and was situated close to the train station. Many affluent people built their residences there. Many took exception to the name Poor Street, so eventually the name was changed to Probart Street. Gash never lived in the house himself, but after his death his family moved into the home in 1872, when the house was painted its famous red color and named the Red House. Throughout the years, the Red House has been used for a variety of things – family home, a boarding house, the post office and even the Brevard Institute School. Since the mid-1980s the Red House has operated as a Bed & Breakfast once again. In 2021 it was purchased as a private home. **Can you find the Red House? [TIP: The Red House is now a private home. Please respect the property owners and do not go on the property.]**

