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HERITAGE CORRIDOR DISCOVERY CENTERS

An Adventure of Their Own

By Devon Harris

From Table Rock Mountain to the wharves of McClellanville, the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor is a self-guided tour through the storied history of the South and the lifestyle of its people. Along the way are two Heritage Corridor Discovery Centers—in Edgefield and Blackville—to make the most of your adventure.

Each Center offers something for everyone to enjoy, with dynamic exhibits and unique gift shops for that one-of-a-kind South Carolina souvenir. The friendly staff stands ready to help you with other site visits along the corridor and provide insight into lodging, dining and shopping.

Both Discovery Centers welcome children and offer educational programs for school groups and home-schooled children.

Region 3 Discovery Center, Blackville, SC

The railroad played an important role in the development of Aiken, Barnwell, Bamberg and Orangeburg counties which comprise Region 3 of the Heritage Corridor. At this center, visitors explore area history via a simulated railway car that whisks them past farm fields, blackwater rivers and lazy crossroads to the sounds of clanking rails and train whistles. Local residents serve as visitor guides with hands-on information and experiences to take you through your travels.

A waiting conductor begins the orientation with the aid of a video. A leisurely walk down the railroad tracks lets you experience and view the varied histories of the area. The development of agriculture, the railroads, industry, people and cultures of the region are all part of the adventure that awaits you.

Children also get into the act at the Region 3 Discovery Center, which has something for all ages. In the Thomas the Train room, children learn the impact of railroads on South Carolina. Here they can read interactive books, play with the Thomas the Train set and watch a video of Thomas' own exciting adventures.

When the tour is finished, you are invited to the gift shop where unique and interesting items from local artisans are for sale, and you can have a cup of coffee or just relax in the sunroom. Center staffers are happy to help visitors with information on travel, dining and interesting sites to visit. Hop aboard! It is a journey you are sure to enjoy!

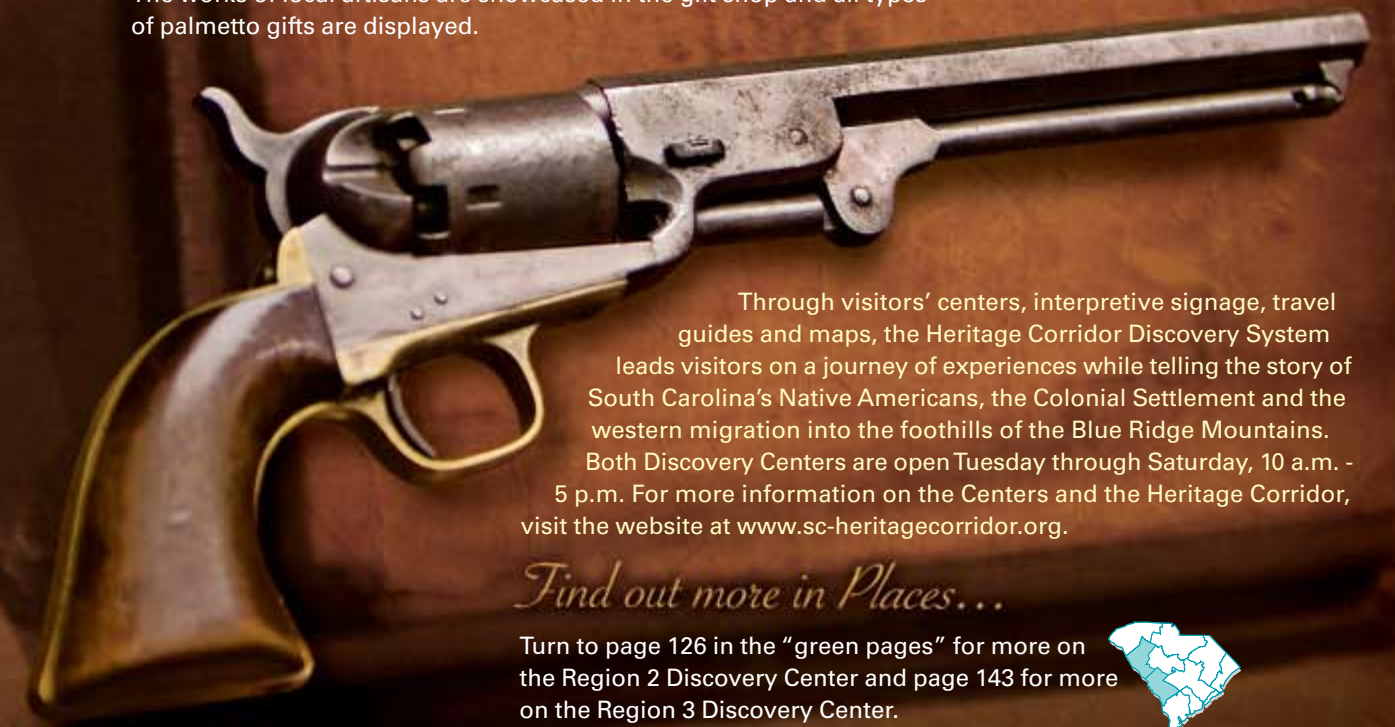


Region 2 Discovery Center, Edgefield, SC

Representing Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood and McCormick counties, the Region 2 Discovery Center tells the stories and histories that shaped the four counties.

Housed in a restored farmhouse from the 1840s, exhibits in the 6,000-square-foot museum take you from natural landscapes and settlements through modern times with a virtual bike tour video of the area. Visitors get to explore the region's vast military history and get a better understanding of the hot political issues of the time that led to the firing upon Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor signaling the Civil War. Exhibits also show the fall of the Confederacy and the signing of surrender papers in what is now the Burt-Stark Mansion in picturesque Abbeville. The museum contains a number of artifacts donated by many generous family members, including weaponry from the Civil War and Old Edgefield Pottery.

The invention of the cotton gin by Eli Whitney made cotton a prized commodity in South Carolina. Cotton was indeed "King" in Region 2 and the museum's expansive cotton exhibit tells why it was so profitable. The works of local artisans are showcased in the gift shop and all types of palmetto gifts are displayed.



Through visitors' centers, interpretive signage, travel guides and maps, the Heritage Corridor Discovery System leads visitors on a journey of experiences while telling the story of South Carolina's Native Americans, the Colonial Settlement and the western migration into the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Both Discovery Centers are open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. For more information on the Centers and the Heritage Corridor, visit the website at www.sc-heritagecorridor.org.

Find out more in Places...

Turn to page 126 in the "green pages" for more on the Region 2 Discovery Center and page 143 for more on the Region 3 Discovery Center.

