

The Gertrude Smith House

708 North Main Street

Mount Airy, NC 27030

Around the turn of the century, Jefferson Davis Smith built a late Victorian-Colonial Revival house overlooking North Main Street. Smith was a local merchant and landowner who operated a general store, several farms, and numerous rental properties. After his death, his oldest daughter, Gertrude, moved back to the Smith family home and assumed the management of the family businesses. Gertrude, who was an interior decorator, had previously worked with two prestigious decorating firms in New York City and owned her own interior decorating business in Greensboro for many years. She used her decorating talents when she came back to Mount Airy by updating and enlarging her childhood home and filling it with beautiful period antiques. Gertrude was also very involved in historic preservation and was one of the charter members of the Mount Airy Restoration Foundation. It was her passion for preservation that caused her to form the Gilmer-Smith Foundation whose board of directors would oversee the perpetual care of her home. When Gertrude died in 1981 at the age of 90, she willed that the home be left as though it was still occupied and that it be used as a 'living museum'.

A tour of the Gertrude Smith House gives visitors the feeling that the Smith's just walked out the back door. Furnishings, accessories, and artwork are displayed just as they were when the Smith family lived there. Even the dining room table is set with Miss Gertrude's china and crystal. Personal items have been carefully placed throughout the home for all who come for a visit to relish, appreciate, and enjoy.

For an added treat, visitors can meander through the meticulously landscaped grounds. This beautiful yard contains trees and shrubs planted decades ago. Giant oak and ash trees, along with fruit and nut trees, redbuds, and dogwoods are among the original plantings. Vintage shrubs such as forsythia, scotchbroom, spirea, lilac and winter honeysuckle are woven throughout the Victorian landscape.

The Gertrude Smith House is open for tours from the beginning of April until the end of December every Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 11-4. There is no admission charge.