



Aiken Visitors Center
and Train Museum
406 Park Avenue, Aiken
www.VisitAikenSC.com
1-888-AikenSC

VISIT AIKEN

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2015

FEATURES

The Little Bake Shoppe
The Inn at Houndslake
Aiken State Park



4th Annual

HORSES & COURSES

ART WALK

For event details visit:
VisitAikenSC.com

Tuesday, April 7th

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Downtown Aiken

Visual Artists • Performing Artists • Extended Shopping Hours



Sponsored by City of Aiken Arts Commission and City of Aiken Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department

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Cover Image by D.S. Owens, *Mind's Eye Photography*

You're always
welcome in Aiken.



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VisitAikenSC



WELCOME TO AIKEN.

Dear Visitors,

Welcome to the City of Aiken, a city on the move with transformation and innovation!

Aiken is rich in arts and diverse culture, historic parks and homes that attract tourists from around the world. Some of our recreational activities include tennis, golf, horseback riding, bike pathways, polo, soccer, baseball, basketball and football. Our equestrian events have brought international recognition to our community. From education to recreation we believe that we have something that everyone can enjoy.

Aiken has a broad range of events throughout the year to include theatre, music and dance performances showcasing local talent. In addition, we offer visitors the experiences of the Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum and The Center for African American History, Art & Culture. We are honored to support events such as Juilliard in Aiken, the Battle of Aiken, Jazz Festivals and Bluegrass Music in addition to having great places to dine. A blend of historic and newly established restaurants provides a strong entertainment base for visitors and local residents. We end the year with our Christmas Lights in Hopelands Garden which is a sight to see. These are the many reasons you will enjoy Aiken and want to return.

We hope that you will take advantage of the unique experiences that Aiken has to offer and discover our rich history, our commitment to family and community and the warmth, charm and friendliness of our citizens.

It is my pleasure to welcome you. If we can do anything to make your stay more enjoyable please contact us by browsing our website.

Sincerely,

Lessie B. Price
Aiken City Councilmember

Contributing Writers:
Elizabeth Harm
Bill Bengtson
Stephanie Turner
Chris Koelker
Rachel Murdy
Peggy Penland





AIKEN'S EVENTS CALENDAR FULL OF FUN

While Aiken has maintained its small town feel, a visitor to Aiken (and locals) will find special events happening here year around! From small street festivals to horse races attracting more than 25,000 people, there is something fun for everyone visiting this beautiful city. Here, we share with you a sampling of some of the exciting Spring events happening in Aiken. For a complete listing of upcoming events hosted in and around the City of Aiken, simply visit www.VisitAikenSC.com and scroll through the Calendar of Events.

MARCH

Gregory White Smith Memorial Concert

March 14
www.juilliardinaiken.com

The Aiken Trials

March 14
www.aikentrials.com

Spring Steeplechase

March 21
www.aikensteeplechase.com

Pacers and Polos

March 28
www.pacersports.com

99th Annual Aiken Horse Show

March 27 – 29
www.aikenhorseshow.org

APRIL

Horses and Courses

April 7
www.VisitAikenSC.com

Run United

April 25
www.active.com/aiken-sc/run-united-2015

MAY

National Train Day

May 9
www.VisitAikenSC.com

Aiken Bluegrass Festival

May 8 – 9
www.aikenbluegrassfestival.org



COME SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN AIKEN
www.VisitAikenSC.com/calendar



THE LITTLE BAKE SHOPPE

SERVING UP DELICIOUS HOMEMADE CREATIONS *By Bill Bengtson, Aiken Standard*

“Made from scratch” is a popular phrase at 1552 Whiskey Road, the site of a new business with roots in Wagener and Pennsylvania. The Little Bake Shoppe, an offshoot of a Wagener business with the same name, is now open, with emphasis on homemade creations.

Bread, cookies and cakes – all baked either in Aiken or Wagener – are the specialty, said Jayme Hege, the manager, who estimated that 90 percent of the creations are homemade, winding up in such dishes as sandwiches, soups, salads and wraps.

“About 50 percent of it is made at this store, and we put it in the case fresh every single morning,” she said. “Our breads and our bigger items, because this location is not big enough to bake everything, we bake them at the Wagener store, and they’re transported here every day that we’re open, so everything’s very fresh, and we try to keep our product fresh, and 90 percent of it is homemade. Some of our dressings, we don’t make.”

The original shop, at 135 Main Street in Wagener, has been a hit, and led to demand for more since its establishment in the summer of 2010.

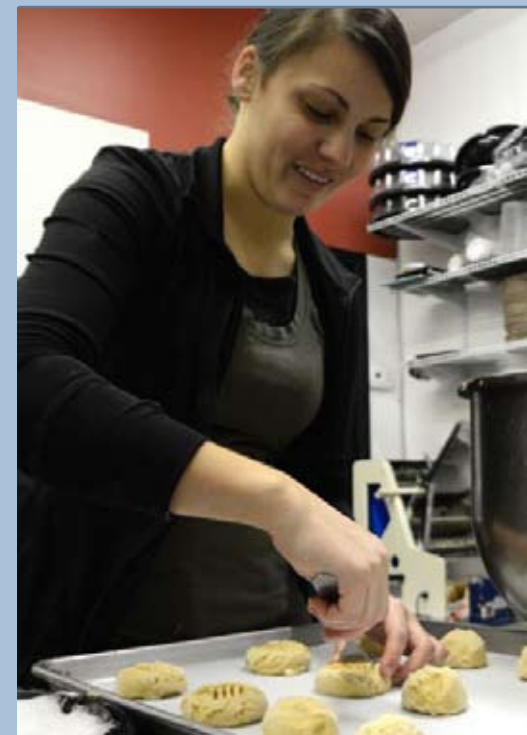
“People have been asking us to open in Aiken or Lexington, and we just looked until we found a place, and this is the first opportunity that came up, so we decided to go with Aiken,” Hege said.

The owners are Pennsylvania natives Jerald and Joanna Hoover, who now live in Wagener, where some culinary creations with Amish and Mennonite roots have found a warm reception. Breakfast and lunch are both on the menu.

“We have sweet bologna sandwiches,” Hege said. “Sweet bologna is from Pennsylvania, and we actually get it from Pennsylvania, so it comes a long ways to come down here. It’s very good. It’s different. A lot of people have to get used to it, but most people like it, once they try it.”

The emphasis on working from scratch, she said, can be surprising to some, “because a lot of people get things in frozen, even frozen dough, and we make it from scratch.” “Mostly, you can get a good meal for under \$10,” Hege said. “That’s your sandwich, your drink, your side, even soup – all that together is going to be under \$10 for one person.”

Hours are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, and the location is between the Shell convenience store and Dunagan’s Sewing and Vacuum, across from Mitchell Center. Details are at 803-226-0703.



Aiken Standard



FALLING FOR THEATRE...AGAIN

A LOCAL’S PERSPECTIVE *by Stephanie Turner*

You probably can recall a time when you were a kid and were forced to dress up in a silly costume, slap on some weird face paint and get up in front of a room full of sparkly-eyed parents with video cameras propped in their hands.

Some kids would then proceed to smile and be ample performers, while others would just slotch in the background and wait until the spectacle was over.

Some of those would then leave that stage and go on to be lawyers, doctors, scientists, teachers, store clerks, stay-at-home parents, restaurant servers or real estate agents.

The others, and not just necessarily those smiling children up front, would be curious or excited by what they were doing while on that stage and would want to try more of it.

I’m not sure which one I was.

All I remember was being given the title of “Broken Doll” in a Christmas pageant, being put in a pink dress and made to wear red lip stick. I was 4 and sat in a box for two hours.

Probably not the most enlightening or thrilling role, but it was my first nevertheless.

Since then I have been fixed, taken out of the box and winded up to go on and sing in glee clubs and school choruses, to try my hands - and lungs - at various string and woodwind instruments, to dance on the then-Augusta State University stage two years in a row, to create various crafts, paintings and pottery, to write short stories, diary entries and poetry and to work onstage and offstage in several musicals and non-musicals in and outside of the CSRA.

Stephanie Turner was born and raised in Augusta, Ga. She graduated from Valdosta State University in south Georgia with a journalism degree in July 2012. A month after she graduated, she began work with the Aiken Standard. Stephanie currently writes promotional stories (aka promos) on upcoming concerts and plays, a health story and an author profile. Every other week, she writes a story highlighting a local restaurant.



FALLING FOR THEATRE...AGAIN *Continued*

“As I continued to write about performing, I missed actually, well, performing.”

In 2012, I was hired onto the Aiken Standard as a news reporter. A few months after I started, I was approached to be the new Living on the Go writer. I had no idea what that meant, except that I would be doing longer pieces. That was enough for me.

I couldn’t picture, as I switched desks to a spot right by the window, that I would, over the next two years, meet college students publishing poetry books, 90-year-old pianists, movie-makers, historians, photographers, painters, and actors with their own production companys.

The first major story I did as the new Living on the Go reporter was the promotional story on the 2012 Aiken Community Playhouse production “Miracle on 34th Street,” directed by Thurmond Whatley. I remember being excited, yet nervous, as I talked to the actors and director and then feeling anxious and paranoid as I was writing that my final product would be ill-received and somehow incorrect.

I am proud to report I still have my job. Guess I must doing something right - no pun intended. But, as I continued to write about performing, I missed actually, well, performing.

I saw the stage and the theater, attended rehearsals, mingled with performers, but I wasn’t doing any performing.

That is until the summer of 2013 when I saw an announcement for the annual Aiken Downtown Development Association’s annual murder mystery dinner theater. My desire to try this different type of performing outweighed any concerns I had about how I was going to manage it with my work schedule. The show’s director was Thurmond Whatley.

I came into the URS Center for Performing Arts (also referred to as the Aiken Community Playhouse) the night of auditions, ready. I didn’t know what to expect but I was ready nevertheless.

Thurmond cast me as a sarcastic waitress named Amber, alongside, among others, Mandy Woodhouse and Jimmy Moore, two of the leads in “Miracle,” Tony Baughman, or Tony B. as he is known by his Oldies KSX 92.7FM radio audience, and Lorraine Ray, a beloved music teacher that I already knew by having covered her Kinderchoir group for the paper.

We practiced all summer at First Presbyterian Church before moving into Newberry Hall. The production ended up being a complete success, and I never had so much fun doing a show before.

Last summer came the end of my six-year musical hiatus when I was cast in Aiken

Community Playhouse’s “9 to 5,” directed by Bradley Watts.

Finally, I got to not only act but to sing and dance on a stage I’ve taken pictures and interviewed people on for two years. I got to be part of the Playhouse family.

That was also the last show my father John Turner saw me in. My dad, after battling a long time with much sickness, died on August 1, 2014. He was 61.

That fall, I stood up in front of a small, casual crowd in the Playhouse’s blackbox theatre and read a poem I composed in his honor.

That’s how comfortable I, a fairly private person, feel at the Aiken Community Playhouse. Though life has shifted since then, I have kept going.

From October to January, I re-joined Tony Baughman as his assistant director for Edgefield County Theatre Company’s production of “Doubt.” It was a proud period of my so-far theatre career.

As for what I’ve been doing since then, I’m still active with the paper and keeping up with all the local arts organizations while doing my best to get the word out about as many authors, artists and events as I can with no plans to slow down my own artist journey.



AIKEN STATE PARK *by Rachel Murdy*

Located in Windsor, South Carolina, Aiken State Park is one of 16 South Carolina State Parks built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. This thousand acre park was built by an African American detachment of the CCC, and their handiwork is still visible at the park today.

If you're looking for a place to escape the hustle and bustle of the city and enjoy outdoor recreation, Aiken State Park is the place for you. The park has a three-mile long hiking trail called the Jungle Nature Trail. This flat, easy trail is a great way to explore the park.

If hiking's not quite your style, Aiken State Park has a canoe and kayak trail along the South Fork of the Edisto River. This trail winds for 1.7 miles down the river between two canoe landings and allows visitors the experience of paddling the river without having to take a day long trip, as some more experienced paddlers choose to do. Canoes are available for rent in the park office.

The swimming area at Aiken State Park is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day each year. This area allows visitors to cool off in the park lake as well as picnic along the shoreline. Three different picnic shelters are also scattered throughout the park and can be reserved for group outings. These shelters provide a great location for anything from a family gathering to an office retreat.

Not far from the lake is the playground area. This newly-upgraded amenity provides a fun area for children to play at the park.

Fishing is also a popular activity at Aiken State Park. Bring your own rod and reel, or borrow one from the park office through DNR's Tackle Loaner Program. Fishing boats can also be rented through the park office. A valid South Carolina fishing license is required to fish in Aiken's four lakes or in the Edisto River.

If you'd like to spend the weekend at Aiken State Park, there are a variety of camping options available. A few sites accommodate RVs up to 35 feet, and all 25 campsites have water and electrical hookups. Restroom facilities with showers are available for campground visitors as well. There is also a primitive campground open to organized groups who are up for the experience.

For more information, contact the park directly at 803-649-2857 or aiken@scprt.com.

www.SouthCarolinaParks.com



OFF THE BEATEN PATH THE INN AT HOUNDSLAKE *by Peggy Penland*

The Inn at Houndslake is a unique family-owned property which provides a "home away from home" to business and leisure travelers. Guests call it a "hidden gem". This 34-room Inn is conveniently located within the city limits of Aiken, but it is tucked away between two fairways. Most every room has a peaceful golf course view.

Houndslake Country Club (Aiken's first country club) opened in April of 1975. Its founder, Robert Penland later conceived a plan for a hotel to accommodate guests on site. The Inn at Houndslake (next to the Clubhouse) opened its doors ten years later in April of 1985. The Club has always been private, but the Inn (formerly The Guest House at Houndslake) has always been open to the public. A common misconception still exists today that the Inn is limited to members only. The Proprietor, Peggy Penland, has a goal to really get the message out that anyone is welcome to stay at The Inn at Houndslake.

Aside from the lovely golf views, what makes this Inn unique is that Houndslake Country Club privileges are extended to every guest.

The Club's amenities include various dining options, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, 8 tennis courts, and 27 holes of golf. A massage therapist, Susan Lott of Aiken Massage Associates has a studio on the lower level of the Inn. A nature trail leads from the Inn down to Dogwood Lake. A limited number of pet-friendly rooms are available which have become increasingly popular in the last few years.

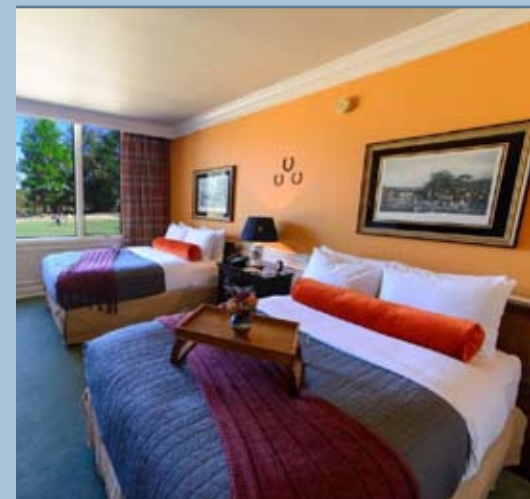
In March of 2013 the Seawell family took over the operations of Houndslake Country Club. Members and guests appreciate their true southern hospitality and welcoming personalities. The Seawell's are a family of PGA Professionals with great respect in the golf industry. In 2014, Jackie Seawell was selected as the "Father of the Year" by Golf Week magazine.

"Golf groups love it here!" said Peggy Penland. "Golfers typically travel by car to our Inn and some never leave until it is time to go home." The Inn at Houndslake is also popular for weddings, reunions, meetings and bridal or baby showers.

The Hospitality / Meeting Room is rented by the day or half-day. With 15 confirmed guest room reservations those fees are waived.

The Inn at Houndslake is located within minutes of historic downtown Aiken. Tours are available so guests can discover the fascinating history of our small city and experience its cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Masters Week is, of course, the peak season of the year at the Inn. Houndslake has the same beautiful rolling terrain as the Augusta National, just 20 miles away.





EPONA

PROTECTRESS OF HORSES, RIDERS AND THEIR FOALS

Newcomer to Aiken’s Downtown District is Epona, a clothing and accessories boutique with an equestrian theme that runs through their collections of wearable art, costume jewelry, giftware and art. Owners Gina Greer and Sharon Marosek chose the name from the Celtic goddess, who was the protectress of the horses, riders and their foals.

When asked why they chose Aiken to open this beautiful new shop, Marosek replied, “We chose Aiken because of its thriving downtown business district that is so well supported by locals, snowbirds and all visitors. Gina has resided here for 7 years. I moved here from Arizona in October to open this boutique with her.”

Greer and Marosek met while they owned businesses in the Caribbean and reconnected when they both moved back to the states to raise their families. The boutique is a combination of their love for the horse and the beauty of bold and vivid colors. Artful images line the walls with beautifully batiked equine-inspired clothing from Indonesia and the latest casual and casual-elegant styles from New York and Los Angeles. Lining the walls you’ll find locally based photography and beautiful images capturing the essence of horse as if you can actually see their auras. Hand beaded jewelry and accessories, such as handbags, scarves, cosmetic bags and compacts are beautifully displayed throughout the store and also carry the equine theme

Don’t think you have to be a horse-lover or involved with horses at to find something of interest at Epona. Many of the shop’s most popular items have no connection to horses at all. The store is a true representation of Aiken with its theme of life fully lived and enjoyed!

Epona On Laurens
137 Laurens Street SW
Aiken, SC 29801
803-262-5102

Conveniently located across the street from the Aiken Brewing Company

For more information, visit
www.eponaonlaurens.com.



COMMUNITY UNITES FOR RACE

Aiken Electric Cooperative, Inc
Your Touchtone Energy® Partner

“We’re excited about bringing a half marathon event to Aiken,” says Aiken Electric Cooperative CEO Gary Stooksbury. “And the best part is, we’re donating all the registration fees to United Way of Aiken County.”

Aiken Electric Cooperative’s RUN UNITED Half Marathon, 5K and Kids’ Fun Run planned for April 25 is in its fourth year, and will kick off in the early morning at the Newberry Street Festival area. This year’s event is uniting businesses and organizations to create a family celebration that will better the Aiken community. With Aiken Regional Medical Centers signing on as a presidential sponsor, the event promises to be the most attended to date.

“Aiken Regional Medical Centers is pleased to be a part of RUN UNITED this year. It is very exciting to participate in a community wellness event within the first couple of months of moving to Aiken,” says Vance Reynolds, newly named CEO, Aiken Regional Medical Centers. Half marathon cash prizes will be awarded in each category, with \$500 overall male and female, including additional \$100

and \$50 prizes. All half marathon finishers and 5K winners will receive a recognition medal. Pre-packet pickup is planned for April 24 at Academy Sports from 5 to 9 p.m. Same day registration begins at 6:30 a.m. April 25. For more information, please visit active.com or aikenco-op.org.

Proceeds from registration fees will go directly to United Way of Aiken County to assist area agencies that exist to help those in the community who need it most. “This is what ‘Live United’ is all about – businesses and organizations coming together so that everybody in our community has the opportunity for a good life,” says Sharon Rodgers, President of United Way of Aiken County.

The 5K and half marathon routes will wind around historic downtown Aiken and then the half marathon heads south with Aiken Polo Club’s Whitney Field en route.

“The polo field has been here for over 130 years and polo has been played here continuously. So, to have another sporting event here,

we couldn’t be more thrilled,” adds Aiken Polo Club, Board Member, Alan Corey. Aiken Polo Club will be providing each runner with group passes to the opening of their 2015 season that coincides with the weekend of RUN UNITED. Children ages three to ten will have a mile run around the downtown Aiken area.

Aiken Electric Cooperative is co-branding the race as a Touchstone Energy event. The national brand for electric cooperatives, Touchstone Energy has four values that are the foundation of every co-op’s service to its members: Innovation, accountability, integrity and commitment to community.

These values represent the cooperative difference and how Touchstone Energy cooperatives connect with and earn the trust of millions of people, every day. Aiken Electric, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is a customer-owned, nonprofit electric utility currently serving 46,000 customers in a nine county area in South Carolina.

Photo caption: Aiken Electric Cooperative CEO Gary Stooksbury, United Way of Aiken County President Sharon Rodgers, Aiken Regional Medical Centers CEO Vance Reynolds and Aiken Polo Club’s Alan Corey meet at Whitney Field to solidify a community partnership for RUN UNITED.



HISTORY OF AIKEN
WILLIAM GREGG
AND AIKEN’S FIRST PEACHES *By: Chris Koelker*

William Gregg was born in Monongalia County, West Virginia in 1800. His mother died when he was four years old, and his uncle Jacob Gregg took him in. William’s uncle made both watches and textile spinning machinery. What may have seemed like two entirely different skill types were, in fact, a perfect match for the young William Gregg.

As an adult, William made his fortune in Charleston from his success as a watchmaker, a silversmith, an importer, and from his inheritance. He wrote a series of articles that appeared in the Charleston Courier. These articles outlined ways in which men of business in the South could invest in manufacturing. Gregg wrote about his belief that the area should stop depending on plantation agriculture as the only means of commerce. These articles eventually were consolidated into a pamphlet called Essays on Domestic Industry and made Gregg the leading advocate for industrialization.

A MOVE FROM CHARLESTON

It was his personal involvement with a Vacluse mill, three miles from downtown Aiken, that spurred him to move from Charleston and begin work on his most deeply held dream of helping poor, southern people prosper in a structured mill village.

By the time Gregg made Aiken his permanent home in 1845, he was quite wealthy. He was ready to prove that his ardent belief in rescuing the economy of the South from a reliance on plantation agriculture could become a reality. Many people who didn’t own their own land found it difficult to provide for themselves and their families.

Above all his interests, William Gregg enjoyed gardening. And as a very energetic man on the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, he approached gardening with the same enthusiasm as he did everything else in his life.



WILLIAM GREGG AND AIKEN’S FIRST PEACHES. *Continued*

These people often could not read or write, and they had no specific skills other than working on other people’s farms. The Graniteville Manufacturing Company Mill and village were constructed on the banks of Horse Creek – then Edgefield County and today, Aiken County – six miles from the City of Aiken. Gregg’s project was named “Graniteville” because the main material used to construct it was granite mined from a local quarry.

Graniteville had a huge cotton mill at the center of the town. Gregg had houses built that were affordable for the workers to rent and were maintained by the company. Village doctors took care of illness. Many children of that era were forced to work by the age of eight or nine, but Gregg’s “compulsory school” meant that parents could not work for the mill unless they made sure their children attended school regularly. Shortly after the mill opened in 1849, with the village in place, Graniteville became one of the most successful textile factories in the southern United States.

HIGHEST HILL IN TOWN

While Gregg watched so many of his personal theories of industrialization thrive, he made his home up the hill from Graniteville in a house called “Kalmia.” It was built on the summit of the highest hill in the town of Aiken on which hundreds of Kalmia bushes grew. His large house stood on the corner of what today is Richland and Summit. The house was one of the first in town to have “illuminating gas” that provided light, rather than just candles or oil lamps.

Above all other interests, William Gregg enjoyed gardening. And as a very energetic man on the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, he approached gardening with the same enthusiasm as he did everything else in his life. In 1857, he planted 2,000 peach trees in front of his house on the 100 acres on which it stood. Gregg regularly attended meetings with Governor James Hammond at the Beech Island Farmer’s Club to confer with other growers and

apply what he’d learned to make his crop flourish.

Gregg wanted his peach orchard to demonstrate the success that could be accomplished by South Carolina farmers, and soon he began shipping his fruit. Each peach individually wrapped, packed and shipped from the nearby Kalmia Station to Charleston where they were transferred to steamer ship and taken to New York City. Gregg’s Aiken-grown peaches had the reputation in New York as being the freshest peaches available. A mere three days elapsed between the time the peaches were picked in Aiken and ready for sale 800 miles away.

Just before the start of the Civil War, Gregg planted 6,000 more peach trees on terraces that sloped to the east behind his house. All told, Gregg had a combined orchard of 8,500 trees. He was the first commercial peach farmer in South Carolina, as well as the “Father of the Southern Textile Industry.”



DISCOVER AIKEN

EXPERIENCE AIKEN'S GRACE, CHARM AND ELEGANCE

Discovering Aiken is much easier than one might expect! Simply climb aboard our Saturday morning historic tour, hold on tight and experience our virtual time machine. Tour guides for the City of Aiken (who are each certified through our program) offer you a two hour exploration of Aiken's rich history aboard our trolley (weather permitting).

Tours are hosted each Saturday from 10 a.m. – noon and depart from the City of Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum (406 Park Avenue). Participants are encouraged to book their seats well in advance as tickets sell out quickly. For more information or to purchase your \$15 ticket, please call (803) 644-1907.

ON THE TOUR, YOU'LL SEE AND HEAR ABOUT...

- Historic Homes and Churches
- Equestrian Sites
- The Civil War's Battle of Aiken
- The Live Oak Canopy of South Boundary
- A guided walk through Hopelands Gardens, the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame & Museum and Rye Patch
- Aiken's Railroad History
- And much more!

Did you know that Aiken's history can be traced back to a love story?

Join our tour and find out more!

Photo credit: D.S. Owens



STARTING YOUR AIKEN VISIT

In 1833, the first passenger train in the country journeyed full steam ahead from the port city of Charleston through the cotton fields of the rural south and arrived in Aiken. The railroad depot became the center of bustling activity and it holds that same spirit for visitors today.

The City of Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum is a must-see upon your arrival in this historic city. Here you can gather insight on the adventures that await you, from the rambling gardens to upcoming events and where to find the best sandwich this side of the Savannah River.

The museum on-site boasts meticulously accurate dioramas that guide you down the tracks of the SC Canal and Railroad Company, stopping at the various depots in the state as they appeared in 1916. Along with interactive displays, the museum gives you a first glimpse of how Aiken and the surrounding communities were built through the steam of the railroad.

Downstairs at the Museum you will find volunteers and staff eager to assist you with planning your Aiken adventure! Brochures are available for pick up as well. The hours of operation at the Visitors Center are Tuesday – Friday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

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