

Northeast Georgia Mountains

Waterfalls, Grist Mills & Covered Bridges

Waterfalls are the "Gemstones of the East." Each one is faceted differently. Some have beauty that is big and bold, while others have delicate and subtle characteristics. Common natural occurrences, such as rock, wood and water attain their highest form when they come together as a waterfall. People who can't agree on anything else seem to always agree on the beauty of a waterfall.

Only a few waterfalls are visible from the road or parking lots, but most waterfalls are easily reached, requiring varying lengths of walks or hikes. No matter how little or how much you do, hiking is good therapy for the pressures of modern life. So, get out there, stretch those legs, and breathe some fresh air. Enjoy these natural wonders that lighten the heart and stir the soul!

Covered Bridges...why are they covered?

Some say they were covered to make crossing by horse safer, others say it was to provide a dry refuge during a storm. Actually, neither is the reason. The real reason has nothing to do with horses or keeping wagons dry, but rather involves protecting the bridge itself. Wood exposed to the elements decays faster than that which is protected, a roof would protect the bridge's important structural members in the span. Periodic replacement of the roof would be far simpler (and cheaper) than repairing the timbers below.

Gristmills were in most rural communities in the early 1900's. Residents would take their grain to be ground into meal or flour. At one time, Georgia has close to 1200 of the watered-powered wonders. Although they are no longer common, there are a few gristmills still operating that grind fresh corn and other grains which are then sold to the public. To confirm hours and days of operation, call ahead.

WARNING:
The North Georgia Mountains and Chattahoochee National Forest abound with beautiful waterfalls, but the enticing beauty of these falls has killed or seriously injured many people. **DO NOT** try to climb the rocks around waterfalls. They are covered with lichens and mosses that are slippery and can make you lose your grip. Observation decks have been built at many of the most popular waterfalls - use them. They offer the best vantage point for viewing or picture taking. Many waterfalls are posted with warning signs. Please heed them for your safety.

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Mud Creek Falls



Minnehaha Falls

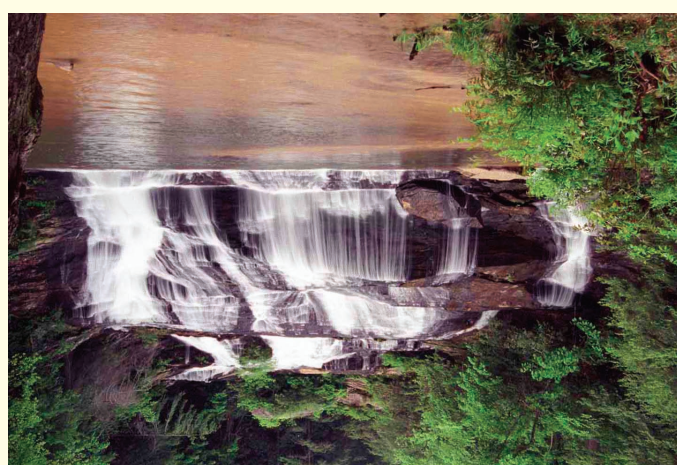


All photography by Jack Anthony
Waterfall poster available! Contact:
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Upper Desoto Falls



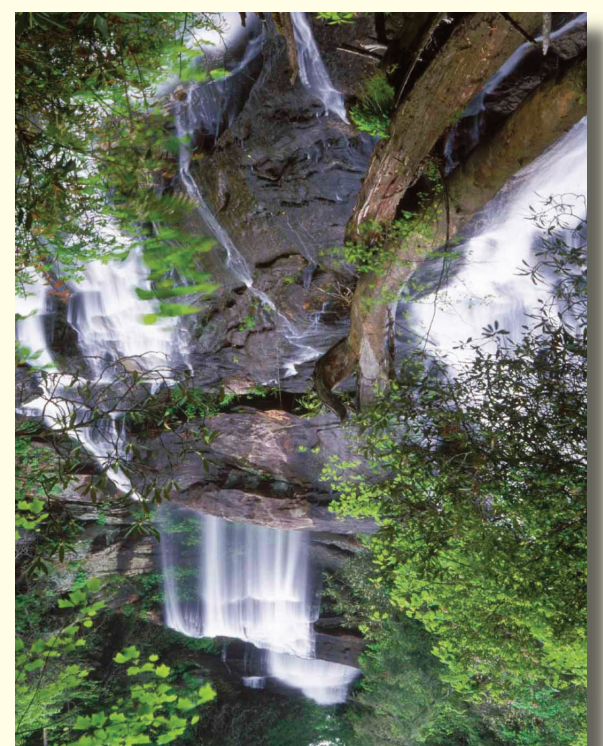
Panther Creek Falls



Amicalola Falls



Holcomb Creek Falls



BLAIRSVILLE-CLEVELAND-DAHLONEGA AREA

DeSoto Falls (Chestatee R.D.)

These five beautiful waterfalls are situated along the three-mile section of the DeSoto Falls Trail in the 650-acre DeSoto Falls Recreation Area. Three of these falls are maintained for the hiker's viewing convenience and are designated as the lower, middle, and upper DeSoto Falls. The lower falls cascade 20 feet. The middle, and most scenic falls, drop 80 feet. Water at the upper falls surges down a granite rock incline for almost 200 feet and may be viewed from the flat, granite formation which overlooks the falls. Those who cannot hike the trail because of time or physical limitations can enjoy a beautiful view from U.S. 129 which borders this scenic area for a considerable distance. DeSoto Falls got their name from a legend that tells of a piece of armor found near the falls. It was decided that the armor belonged to Hernando DeSoto or one of his fellow explorers.

Directions: From Cleveland, take U.S. 129 north 15 miles to DeSoto Falls Recreation Area.

Falls on Waters Creek & Blood Mountain Falls

These falls are located on Blood Mountain Stream which flows almost 20 feet through a rock cut, creating a churning sluice of water. **Directions:** From U.S. 19/129 (Turner's Corner) go west on U.S. 19 for approximately .5 mile to Water's Creek Recreation Area. Turn right and in 1.2 miles pass a roadside waterfall on the right. Drive another 1.6 miles to the second and more scenic waterfall. Park in the lot provided on the right. Across the road is a clearly defined path to the viewing area. From the second waterfall, continue up F.S. Road 34 for another .7 of a mile to an old logging road on the right before F.S. Road fords Crow Mountain Creek. Park here and then take the route to the falls (approximately .8 mile in length) treads the logging road.

Helton Creek Falls (Brasstown R.D.)

Helton Creek Falls Trail (.3 mile in length) follows Helton Creek to two waterfalls. The trail accesses the lower falls at both the bottom and top of the falls and ends at the bottom of the upper falls. The total vertical drop is more than 100 feet and the rocks are deceptively slippery around these falls ~ exercise caution. **Directions:** From Blairsville, take US 129 south for 11 miles. Turn left on the first gravel road past the entrance to Vogel State Park. Go 2.2 miles to a small pullout parking area and trailhead will be on the right.

High Shoals Falls (Brasstown R.D.)

These falls have succession of five waterfalls and have an estimated total vertical drop of 300 feet. They are located in a 170- acre scenic area. The High Shoals Trail (1.2 miles in length) follows along High Shoals Creek to observation decks beside two of the five streams cascading in the High Shoals Scenic Area. Please stay on the trails and observation decks. **Directions:** Take GA 75 north from Helen for 11.4 miles. Turn right on F.S. Road 283 at the High Shoals sign. Go 1.5 miles on this road to the High Shoals Scenic Area.

CARNESVILLE AREA

Cromer's Mill Covered Bridge

It crosses Nails Creek and is also known as Nails Creek Covered Bridge. Built in a Town Lattice design in 1906 by J M "Pink" Hunt it is 132 ft. in length and 12 feet width. Picnic Area is not well maintained and is overgrown at times. Historic marker is at site. **Directions:** Located Near Carnesville. Take GA 106 about eight miles south of Carnesville, cross Nails Creek and take the immediate (first) left on Baker Road to the bridge. (Baker Road is a gravel road).

CLAYTON AREA

Barker's Creek Mill

This mill was built in 1944 at the site of an older mill that served the community since the first white settlers came into the area in the late 1820's. It is powered by a 12 foot overshot wheel set on babbet bearings. It was converted from a wooden spoked, steel rimmed wheel to the current metal spokes in the 1960's and has been renovated three times in its life, the most recent in the late 1980's. The mill itself is a vertical mill with two 16" flint/granite stones and was built by the Meadow's Milling Company in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. The miller, Woody Malot opens the mill the first Saturday of each month from 1-4 p.m. 706-746-5718. **Directions:** Located near Rabun Gap off US Highway 441 on Betty's Creek Road. Go about .5-mile past the Hambidge Center. Road curves right...mill will be just down the road on the left.

Becky Branch Falls (Tallulah R.D.)

Easily accessible 20-foot cascade located just five minutes from downtown. **Directions:** From Clayton, drive east on Warwoman Road for 2.8 miles and park on left side of road by branch. Walk up the right side of branch on the trail for about 200 yards to a bridge at base of falls.

Dick's Creek Falls (Tallulah R.D.)

Approximately 60 feet high and makes a sheer drop over a granite mound into the Chattooga River. **Directions:** From Clayton, drive six miles east on Warwoman Road. Turn right onto Dick's Creek Road or Sand Ford Road. Go .5-mile and take left across the creek. Go 3.5 miles. Cross second ford and park at Bartram Trail sign. Follow trail north to Dick's Creek. Follow creek to viewing area at top of falls.

Holcomb Creek Falls (Tallulah R.D.)

The Holcomb Creek Trail (1.3 miles in length) begins at the intersection of Hale Ridge Road (F.S. Road 7) and Overflow Road (F.S. Road 86), then follows a short loop to its end on Hale Ridge Road. Passes Holcomb Creek Falls (which drops and flows over shoals for approximately 150 feet) & Ammons Creek Falls where there is an observation deck. **Directions:** Take Warwoman Road east from Clayton for 10 miles. Turn left on F.S. Road 7 (Hale Ridge Road) and drive 9 miles. Park to the east of intersection with Overflow Creek Road (F.S. 86).

Martin Creek Falls

This is a two-tier waterfall (35 feet high) with aquatic plants covering the weeping rock wall on the left. This 20-minute walk (.5 mile in length) follows the Bartram Trail along the west side of the creek. **Directions:** From Clayton, go east on Warwoman Road for three miles. Turn left onto F.S. Road 152 and drive past the Game Checking Station. Drive .5 mile. Park in small cleared camping area on the left at a sharp left bend in the road. Walk west from the camping area. Cross Martin Creek, then travel uphill for about .4 mile to the top of the falls.

Minnehaha Falls (Tallulah R.D.)

Minnehaha Trail (.4 mile in length) follows Fall Branch until it dead ends at Minnehaha Falls. Waterfall is approximately 100 feet high. **Directions:** Take U.S. 23/441 north from Tallulah Falls for three miles to the Rabun Beach Recreation Area sign. Turn left onto Old 441. Go 2.5 miles and take left on Lake Rabun Road. Go one mile past Recreation Area. Take left on Low Gap Road (@ Flat Creek Community sign). Follow Bear Gap road, which forks to the left. Go 1.5 miles to sign marking the trail on the right side of the road.

Mud Creek Falls

Also known as "Little Estatoah", these falls have a vertical drop of 100 feet and flows into Estatoah Falls in Dillard. **Directions:** Take US Highway 441 north to Dillard. Turn right on GA Highway 246 and follow signs to Sky Valley. At Sky Valley's entrance gate, turn left. Turn right on Tahoe Road and follow to the falls.

Logan Turnpike Mill

Located in an old grocery store and gas station. The mill produces fresh stone ground grits, commel, flour, mixes. Open Wednesday-Saturday all year. **Directions:** Located south of Blairsville at 3485 Gainesville Highway. www.loganturnpikemill.com

CLARKESVILLE-CORNELIA AREA

Panther Creek Falls (Chattooga R.D.)

Panther Creek Falls Trail (5.5 miles in length) follows Panther Creek through stands of hemlock and white pine along steep, rocky bluffs of the creek. The trail passes a series of cascades, as well as, Panther Creek Falls and terminates where Davidson Creek joins Panther Creek. The trail is noted for its beautiful variety of wildflowers and ferns while the stream offers excellent opportunities for trout fishermen. Hikers with heavy packs should be cautious of rocky overhangs. **Directions:** From Clarkesville, take U.S. 23/441 north for 10 miles to the Panther Creek Recreation Area. The western end of the trail begins across the highway from the recreation area. The eastern end of the trail can be reached by driving west on Yonah Dam Road.

Angel-Panther Falls

Trail parallels the west side of Joe Branch. Hike .6 of a mile to Panther Falls. Hike another .3 mile to Angel Falls. **Directions:** From Clayton, take U. S. 441/23 south for 7 miles. Turn right on unnumbered county road for .1 mile, then turn left on GA Hwy 15 for two miles. Turn right on County Road 10 for five miles. Enter Rabun Beach Campground #2 entrance, go .2 mile to parking area on right. Trailhead is 80 feet to the north.

COMER AREA

Watson Mill Covered Bridge

It spans the south forth of the Broad River and is also known as Broad River Bridge or Carlton Bridge. Washington W King built it in 1885 in the Town Lattice design. It is 288.6 feet in length with three spans and is 236 feet long. There is parking and a picnic area as well as a Historic Marker. Watson Mill opened in 1798 and for a hundred years operated continuously as a grist, flour, or corn mill and originally served as the focal point for community life. Directions: Take GA 22 south of Comer for two miles, follow signs to Watson Mill Bridge State Park.

CUMMING AREA

Poole's Mill Bridge

It crosses Settledown Creek and is also known as Heardsville or Pool's Mill Bridge. It was built in 1901 by Bud Gentry in a Town Lattice design with a length of 94.6 feet and width of 14.5 feet. There is a parking and picnic area as well as a Historic Marker. Directions: Take GA 20 seven miles west of Cumming to Ducktown, then three miles north to Heardsville, bridge is one mile north on Poole's Mill Road.

DAWSONVILLE AREA

Amicalola Falls

Amicalola is a Cherokee word meaning "tumbling waters" and located within Amicalola Falls State Park. There are seven cascades totaling 729 feet and it is the highest waterfall in Georgia. A parking area leads to an observation deck, which actually crosses the top of the falls. At the base of the falls there is a parking area, a reflection pool and a .3-mile paved trail leading to the top of the falls. **Directions:** The park's entrance is on GA 52, west of Dahlonega and east of Ellijay.

HELEN-HIAWASSEE AREA

Anna Ruby Falls (Chattooga R.D.)

Two creeks, Curtis and York, climax their run down the steep slopes of Tray Mountain in twin waterfalls, Curtis Creek falling 153 feet and York Creek dropping 50 feet. The two waterfalls jointly are called Anna Ruby Falls, named after the only daughter of James H. "Captain" Nichols, retired Colonel of the Civil War who settled in the Nacoochee Valley in 1870. The Anna Ruby Falls Trail (.4 mile in length) is paved, but relatively steep with benches located along the trail for those who want to sit and rest or just enjoy the scenic beauty of the area. At the base of the falls, an observation deck offers a beautiful view of the twin falls. **Directions:** Take GA 75 north from Helen for one mile. Turn right on GA 356 for 1.5 miles; then go left on the entrance road to the falls. (This is a fee area, but there are bathrooms, a visitor center, a nature trail for the blind, and gift shop.)

Dukes Creek Falls (Chattooga R.D.)

Dukes Creek Trail (.8 mile in length) winds its way into Dukes Creek Gorge where it dead ends across from the 300-foot Dukes Creek Falls. The area offers scenic beauty and excellent gold panning opportunities. **Directions:** Take GA 75 north from Helen for 1.5 miles. Turn left on GA 356 (75 Alternate) and go 2.3 miles to the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway. Turn right and go two miles to the Dukes Creek Falls Recreation Area.

Horse Trough Falls (Chattooga R.D.)

Horse Trough Falls Trail (.4 mile in length), leads to the beautiful Horse Trough Falls and is an excellent trail for novice hikers. **Directions:** Take GA 75 north from Helen for eight miles to Unicoi Gap. Turn left onto F.S. Road 44 (Wilkes Creek Road). Go 5.4 miles to a sharp curve and take the right fork. Go 0.2 mile, ford the stream and follow colored blazes on trees.

Mill Creek Falls

The waterfall on Ground Hog Branch drops about 150 feet where it combines with the main Mill Creek. The combined streams plunge another estimated 150 feet, ending in a series of rapids, which cascade down the Mill Creek Gorge. **Directions:** From Hiawassee, take U. S. 76 east. Turn right on GA Highway 75. Travel 3.5 miles. Turn left on Mill Creek Road (F.S. Road 26) for 2.5 miles. The road crosses Mill Creek 1.5 miles from the pavement. Parking is available in the camping area on the right and at the pull-outs on the left and right side of the road. Hike through the primitive camping area and follow the west side of Mill Creek downstream.

Nora Mill & Granary

This mill is a large four-story building that was built in 1876 complete with 1,500 pound French Burr Mill Stones and a 100 ft. wooden raceway that feeds water to a water turbine - not a vertical water wheel. The mill was constructed in 1876 by John Martin when he came to Georgia to mine for gold. Unlike most miners, Mr. Martin made Sautee-Nacoochee Valley his permanent home. In 1905 Larmatine Hardman, a former governor of Georgia, bought the mill and named it "Nora Mill" in memory of his sister Nora. The mill is open year round - except Christmas day. **Directions:** On GA Highway 17-75 south of the Alpine town of Helen. www.noramill.com

Raven Cliff Falls (Chattooga R.D.)

These falls are one of the most unusual in the North Georgia area because the water flows through a split in the face of a solid rock outcropping to the ground 100 feet below. Behind the split, the water drops approximately 60 feet and then rushes through the rock face and drops 20 feet into a deep pool. The water then cascades 20 more feet to Dodd Creek. Three other waterfalls can be found on Dodd Creek ~ the largest is downstream from Raven Cliff Falls and measures 70 feet. The area offers excellent opportunities for day-hiking however, there are no facilities of any type provided. Visitors are encouraged to exercise extreme caution in this undeveloped area. **Directions:** Take GA 75 N from Helen for 1.5 miles. Turn left on GA 356 (75 Alternate) and travel 2.3 miles to the Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway. Turn right and travel 2.8 miles to the trailhead and parking area.

Sautee Covered Bridge

It is also known as Helen Bridge, Sautee Bridge, Nacoochee Bridge, Chickamauga Bridge and crosses Chickamauga Creek. Proclaimed Georgia's smallest covered bridge, it was featured in the film "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain". Will Pardue built it in 1895 in the Queen Post design with a length of 36.8 feet long and width of 11 feet 10 inches. There is parking and a picnic area as well as a Historic Marker. **Directions:** Take GA 75 north of Cleveland for seven miles, turn right onto GA 17 for about two miles, then left on GA 255 for two miles near the town of Sautee.

HOMER/MAYSVILLE AREA

Blind Susie Covered Bridge

It spans Grove Creek and is also known as Lula Covered Bridge and Hyder Bridge. W M Thomas built the bridge in 1915 in the King Post (King-rod) design with a length of 34 feet. **Directions:** From Homer, take GA 51 West, turn left onto Antioch Church Road and go one mile to bridge. It's on the right down below level of the road, outside the town of Lula.

Hurricane Shoals Covered Bridge

This bridge was constructed in the image of the original 1886 bridge that was burned by vandals in 1972. The Creek and Cherokee Indians believed that the land between the points of Yamacutah (Tumbling Shoals) and Yamtrahoochee (Hurricane Shoals) was sacred. **Directions:** From Athens take 441 North to Commerce. In Commerce, turn left onto Highway 98 West. Cross I-85 going toward Maysville. After about 2 miles, turn left onto Highway 82 Spur. Located in Hurricane Shoals Park (near Maysville), 2 miles down on the left.

Ragsdale Mill

The Ragsdale Mill was built circa 1863 by The Reverend Francis Marion Ragsdale (brother of Captain Michael Jackson Ragsdale) during the Civil War. It is located near Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church Northeast of town. **Directions:** Located near Homer.

RABUN GAP/DILLARD AREA

Sylvan Falls Mill

The mill was constructed in 1840 from wormy chestnut wood where it has operated as a gristmill for over 150 years. The original wood water wheel was replaced in 1952 by a 27-foot, 10,000-pound steel wheel that was relocated from Tennessee. The waterfall, fed from springs atop Black Rock Mountain, cascades over one side of the property, overlooking the picturesque and tranquil land of Wolfork Valley. Today, the mill has been renovated and converted to a charming, romantic bed and breakfast inn. **Directions:** From Clayton on U.S. Highway 441 go about 1/2 mile north of Mountain City turn left onto Wolfork Road (across from Don's Exxon). Turn left onto Taylor's Chapel Road and proceed for .1 mile to arrive at the B&B on your right.

TOCCOA AREA

Toccoa Falls

This single drop waterfall has a 186- foot drop...26 feet higher than Niagara Falls. From the Gift Shop, it is just a short walk along the stream to the base of the falls. A monument reminds visitors of the tragic loss of lives when the earthen dam broke back in the 1970s. The Gate Cottage Restaurant, above the gift shop, has a wonderful buffet on Sundays. **Directions:** Located on the campus of Toccoa Falls College. From Toccoa, take GA Alternate 17 for about one mile. It will be on the left.