

Campbellton-Redwine Road

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The Campbellton-Redwine Road (Highway 70) was not originally a Native American trail. When the road was laid out is unknown, but a road from Rivertown to Campbellton was listed on an 1847 map. Plans were in the works to pave the road in 1953. The road was paved later in the 1950s by convict labor.

Because the road was parallel to the Chattahoochee River, and there were no bridges south of Gordon Street, the system of ferries contributed to the growth along the road.

There were several ferries, including Pumpkintown, Campbellton, Hutcheson, Capps, and Garrett ferries.

Following the death of her husband John Varner in 1836, the widow Varner took over the operation of the Pumpkintown ferry until the Civil War. It is believed that the ferry boat rests beneath the water at the Pumpkintown crossing. The Campbellton and Pumpkintown ferries ran until the mid twentieth century, stopping before the Hutcheson ferry which ceased its operation in 1952.

Throughout the nineteenth century cotton was the main crop along the corridor. William Varner ran a lumber business using the ferries for transportation prior to the Civil War. After the invasion of the boll weevil in the 1920s, corn and wheat replaced cotton as important crops in the area. Raising cattle was another source of income. Chickens were raised but mainly for family use. Most families were self-sufficient.

Tenant farmers have long inhabited the Campbellton-Redwine Road corridor. In the 1890s the Jones family had tenant farmers working their lands. The Redwines had tenants on their farm. Tenant farming does not seem to be occurring at the present time because many of the tenants in the community work in the Atlanta area and commute to work. Absentee ownership is abundant in the area.

Electrification came to Campbellton Redwine Road in the 1940. There was a telephone system in nearby Fairburn as early as 1905. It is difficult to establish when telephones became household items in this area, although local lore indicates that it happened in the 1960s.

Rivertown and Redwine developed as river crossing communities. The river crossing community usually consisted of the same resources as are found in the roadside community. The public function was the ferry landing and related buildings nearby.

There are no community buildings at Rivertown. Rivertown was originally known as Cross Anchor, after its site on the river. There was a post office at Rivertown in 1832. The Yates

and Jones families have been prominent families throughout the history of Rivertown as they were major landowners in this agricultural community. Both the Yates and Jones families had a cotton gin. The Jones family had a grist mill and ran the Rivertown general store.

Rico developed more as a crossroads community at the juncture of Rico and Campbellton Redwine Road. The nearby ferries were Capps ferry and Garretts ferry. Rico was once known as Piney Woods or Green Eye. The post office was established there in 1889 with Mr. Tanner as the postmaster. The Piney Woods Baptist Church is now the Providence Baptist Church and long with the Rico United Methodist Church provided the central meeting place for community residents. The site of the original Pine Woods Baptist Church at Garretts ferry contains the graves of many well-known area families, including the Ballards, the Yateses, the Smiths, and the Barfields, as well as their slaves. There was a school at Rico that was expanded in 1930 and Smith's store remains as another community meeting place.

The Redwine community originated with the acquisition of 10,000 acres of land from a land grant to James Hutcheson around 1820. Hutcheson built the plantation plain house that stands today at the intersection of Hutcheson Ferry Road and Campbellton Redwine. After Hutcheson's daughter Sarah married John Redwine, the farm became know as the Redwine plantation. The plantation had a general store and several outbuildings. There was also a double gin for cotton with a steam boiler. Frank Redwine I farmed the land through the Depression, and while the land is no longer used for farming it has remained in the same family since its settlement.

Local residents allow that very little change has occurred along Campbellton-Redwine Road despite the construction of a few houses in recent years. The majority of homes along the corridor are historic, and many are still inhabited. There are about a half-dozen abandoned buildings along the road from Rivertown to Redwine. Common house types to this area are the gabled ell, the central hallway the plantation plain, and the Georgian cottage.

The communities of Rivertown, Rico, and Redwine are agricultural communities formed because of their proximity to the Chattahoochee River and the ferries that crossed it. While these communities along the Campbellton-Redwine Road remain small and almost unknown, they are rich in local history and provide a memorable glimpse into the development of a regional, agricultural community in Georgia.

Note: The document submitted had no source. If you know the author of this piece, please contact info@chattahoocheehillshistoricalsociety.org.