

Ave Maria Grotto

Fact: Named to the National Register of Historic Places.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-4110, fax: (256) 734-2925

Web site: www.avemariagrotto.com **E-mail:** info@avemariagrotto.com

Story Angles

- ◆ Quiet, Bavarian monk builds shrine with over 150 miniature replicas of Biblical structures and world famous buildings on Alabama's only Benedictine abbey.
- ◆ Discards of Gold: monk transforms discarded materials into “Jerusalem in Miniature.”

Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Fact: Built by world famous religious leader, Mother Angelica.

Where: Hanceville, Ala.

Contact: (256) 352-6267

Web site: www.olamshrine.com **E-mail:** pilgrimages@olamshrine.com

Story Angle

- ◆ Home of the Poor Clare Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration, monastery is modeled after European 13th century monasteries with both Spanish and Italian influences.
- ◆ Monastery features stained glass windows from Germany, building stone from Canada, marble pillars and inlaid marble designs from Italy, roofing tiles from Columbia, South American, carved stonework decorations from artisans in Spain, and the main altar area is made of carved cedar covered in gold leaf.

Clarkson Covered Bridge

Fact: Alabama's largest covered truss bridge.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-3369

Web site: www.cullmancountyparks.com/clarkson.htm **E-mail:** ccpr@hiwaay.net

Story Angle

- ◆ Echoes of Wagon Wheels: canyon spanning covered bridge stands to remember early days of transportation. A Civil war skirmish, known as the Battle of Hog Mountain was fought here on April 30, 1863.

Cullman County Museum

Fact: Replica of city's founding father's home.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 739-1258

Web site: www.cullman.com/museum

Story Angle

- ◆ Remembering the Fatherland: Cullman Museum remembers town's founding by a German immigrant, Col. John G. Cullmann, and the early years of the area's development.

Evelyn Burrow Museum of Wallace State College

Fact: Museum of collectibles worth over \$9,053,000

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: 256-734-0693

Web site: www.cullmanmuseum.com

Story Angle

- ◆ Travels through Collections: Husband and wife travel the world collecting items during 65 years of marriage open a museum to honor their World Champion Tennessee Walker “Ebony's Leading Lady” Horse.

Outdoor Fun!

Smith Lake

Fact: 21,000 Acres of Clear Water and over 500 miles of shoreline

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 739-2916

Web site: www.cullmancountyparks.com

E-mail: ccpr@hiwaay.net

- ◆ Bass Fishing: Smith Lake holds the state record for striped bass with a whopping 47 pounds. With annual fishing tournaments, Smith Lake attracts the avid fisherman looking for a challenge.
- ◆ Family Fun Getaway: Smith Lake's clear water makes it appealing to families looking for relaxing getaway. Boats can be rented from surrounding marinas, and Smith Lake Park offers activities such as a pool with spiral waterslide, putt-putt golf, playground and concession stand. Picnic areas offer families a break from the norm.

Hurricane Creek Park

Fact: Site on the North Alabama Birding Trail and registered Tree Forest

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-2125

Web site: www.hurricanecreek.homestead.com

E-mail: hurricane@cullmanrecreation.org

Story Angles

- ◆ Birding through North Alabama: The park offers a number of trails, leading birders through a landscape crisscrossed by streams and waterfalls, listen for Red-eyed Vireos and Great Crested Flycatchers among the numerous Northern Cardinals and Carolina Chickadees. Peer through the canopy for Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawks soaring high overhead. During the winter White-breasted Nuthatches and Yellow-rumped warblers join the cardinals and chickadees, while almost anything could appear during migration.
- ◆ Back to Nature: Enjoy a primitive camping, hiking and mountain biking through the 67+ acre natural area, nestled in a 500 foot deep canyon in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains.

Echota Cherokee Interpretive Center

Fact: Located on the original grounds of the Cherokee Indians

Where: Cullman & Falkville, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-7337

E-mail: echotacherokeetribeofal@yahoo.com

Story Angle

- ◆ Indian History and Heritage: Visit the 1860's log house which illustrates the life of early Americanized Cherokees. Visit the outdoor classroom to learn about the cultural history of the Cherokee Indians. Walk the 1.5 miles of naturalized trails which feature a variety of native plants typically used as "Medicine Plants" by the Cherokee Indians. Enter native bluff shelters and take in the views from the 40-foot observation bridge for views off of Lacon Mountain into the Tennessee Valley.

Shopping “Hot Spots”

Historic Warehouse District

Fact: Originally built to distribute groceries, old stockrooms now host Cullman’s finest shopping experience.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-1540, ext. 21

Story Angles

- ◆ Unique Shopping Experience: The historic warehouse district reminds most that visit of times before shopping malls and chain stores. District merchants make a pretty eclectic lot. From baby clothes, to scrapbooks, from fine gifts to custom invitations and stationery, from quilts to perfume, to premium portraits, custom embroidery, fine jewelry, children’s and women’s shoes, and fabulous home furnishings. Don’t forget to take a break at **Rumor’s Deli** for breakfast, lunch or coffee — lunch features specialty sandwiches which claim to “Put meat on your buns”! **Sweet Potato Heaven** is another hot spot after an afternoon of shopping — enjoy the delicious Sweet Potato Custard Pie (featured in Alabama’s 100 dishes to eat before you die), homemade treats or grab a gourmet meal prepared and ready to heat for dinner in the evening.

Southern Accents Architectural Antiques

Fact: Original and rescued architectural pieces from homes throughout America.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (877) 737-0554

Web site: www.antiques-architectural.com

E-mail: info@antiques-architectural.com

Story Angle

- ◆ Historic home remodeling: From antique draw handles and delicate lamps, to massive fireplace mantels and sturdy clawfoot tubs, this unique retail shop is a home decorators dream come true. People come from all over the Southeast to see this amazing architectural salvage store which offers everything to remodel a historic home.

A Touch of German

Fact: Showcases products which display the German Heritage of Cullman’s original settlers

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 739-4592

Story Angle

- ◆ See Germany’s Quality Workmanship in Alabama: Seeming to hang in the air is the tinkling music of Thorens, Reuge and Steinbach music boxes, offered in an assortment of designs. Dozens of German clocks — musical, cuckoo and chiming, add their melody every hour, on the hour. Regimental and Bavarian steins adorn one display while Steiff German stuffed animals, antique toy reproductions and dolls rest on another. This store offers each visitor a touch of German — “und das ist gut!”

Smith Farms

Fact: In 1955, this business began as a roadside stand selling seasonal produce, bacon and a few cured hams.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (888) 300-7987

Story Angle

- ◆ “Southern” Foods for Delivery?: Gift giving made easy, come in and enjoy the smell of the onsite smoked meats or online packaged with a personalized gift card to make it extra special. Include country cured ham, bacon, sausage or pork chops, cheeses, salad dressings, honey, sorghum, jams and jellies, locally ground flour and meal. An old-fashioned experience you won’t soon forget!

Over for more fantastic shopping spots!

Presitigious Pets – Funky Fido & Company

Fact: Started when the owner re-did her bedroom and wanted to include a dog bed that didn't stand out.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-2660

Web site: www.funkyfidoandcompany.com

E-mail: info@funkyfidoandcompany.com

Story Angle

- ◆ Pet Beds for the “Stars”: Melody Basch began designing pet beds for herself when she redecorated her Master bedroom. Since, she has created custom designs for Hollywood stars including: **Tori Spelling, Rachel Hunter, Hillary Duff, Nicole Richie** and most famously, **Paris Hilton's** Tinkerbelle. From designer bedding to custom colors, Funky Fido & Company has it all!

All Steak Restaurant

Fact: The original sign was supposed to read “All Steak Hamburgers” but the owners ran out of money and the name has remained the same despite the restaurants success.

Where: Cullman, Ala.

Contact: (256) 734-4322

Story Angle

- ◆ Southern Dining at its Finest: All Steak Restaurant offers a variety of delicious meals, from blackened steaks covered in lump crab meat to fried-chicken and vegetables, All Steak has something for everyone. But no meal would be complete without the restaurant famous “orange rolls” which come with every meal and are featured in Alabama's 100 dishes to eat before you die! These tasty treats are worth the trip!

**A photo CD of spots around town is available by contacting,
Lindsey P. Dossey via e-mail: ldossey@corrcomm.net or by phone (800) 313-5114.**

