

Moreland is Coweta's Mayberry — with a twist of literary greatness for extra flavor.

With a population of about 400, Moreland is a gem of a community. Children play on the playground in the downtown square in the afternoon, watched over by parents and grandparents. There are lots of places in town to walk or jog.

Though Moreland lacks some of the commercial activity seen in other parts of the county, most residents seem happy with the hometown atmosphere. When a state planning process led to meetings in Moreland where people set out their dreams for the future, most people wanted the historic town center and neighborhoods to be preserved. Several people suggested a bypass road be constructed around the town, creating an area for a bank, grocery store, restaurants and shops as the town grows.

The town's literary legacy is illustrated by its three museums. Motorists coming into town on Highway 29/27 pass the Lewis Grizzard Memorial Museum, which shares space with a monument company. One can almost imagine the sardonic column Grizzard would write about that pairing.

Grizzard grew up in Moreland, attending the local school and the Moreland United Methodist Church, where his funeral was held. Grizzard captured the hearts of readers in newspaper columns and books before he died of a congenital heart problem at 47 in 1994. In addition to his books and columns,

Grizzard also had a popular stand-up comedy tour and played the Sugarbaker sisters' brother on "Designing Women."

On the square, an 1880-era house sits. It is the Erskine Caldwell Birthplace and Museum. The house originally stood about three miles from town, but it was moved into the

city in the early 1990s. The simple home was the birthplace of novelist Erskine Caldwell, who wrote such provocative novels as "Tobacco Road," "God's Little Acre" and "Trouble In July." Caldwell moved away from Coweta County as a boy, but his widow, Virginia, and all three of his sons have visited the museum.

The third museum, operated by the Moreland Community Historical Society, is located in the historic Moreland Mill, which also contains the town offices and a large public meeting room. The Old Mill Museum contains a variety of historical items from Moreland's past. Old store ledgers detail purchases, on credit, decades ago. Farming implements recall the backbreaking labor of an earlier time, and an array of cultivators recall the era when the Camp family had a factory that manufactured such farm necessities.

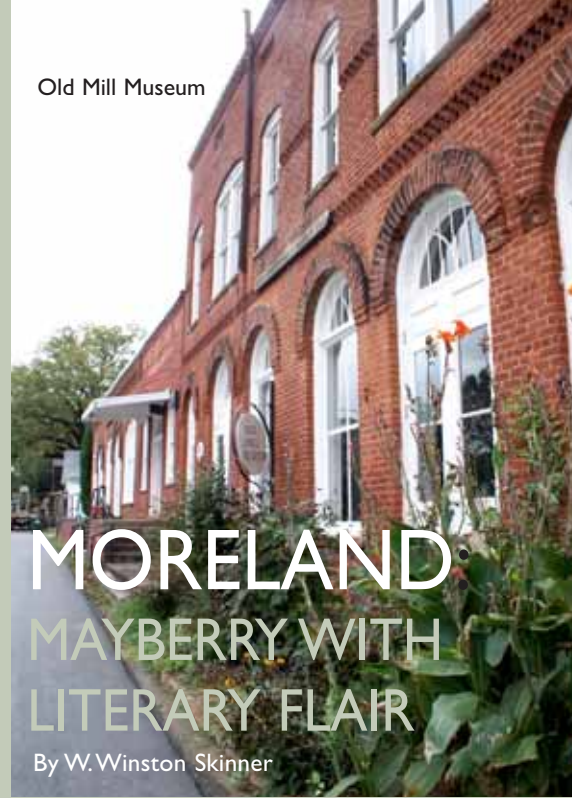
The Old Mill Museum also has a reconstruction of Dr. Quigg Young's medical office and an organ played by Miss Myrtice Cotton at First Baptist Church of Moreland. The museum in the mill provides context for the agricultural world that nurtured Erskine Caldwell a century ago and Lewis Grizzard 50 years later.

Although the past has a front and center role in the Moreland story, the town is also about the present and future. Moreland Elementary School is an anchor of the community, and its students sometimes have parents and grandparents who attended the same school. Beverly Yeager, MES principal, has held that position longer than any other principal in Coweta County.

In the downtown area, Bill Myatt has operated the Gene's Specialties antique shop for years. About a year ago, Grantville photographer Deborah Smith came to town with her Images gallery. She sells her own photographs as well as paintings, sculpture, jewelry, stained glass and other art by Coweta's creative set. She also brings people to town for art lessons and for art exhibits and receptions.

The meeting room at the nearby Moreland Mill is used regularly for family reunions and similar get-togethers. Weddings have been held at the mill, which has also been the location for numerous town meetings and for an elegant dinner celebrating Erskine Caldwell's 100th birthday attended by his son, Dee Caldwell, and a panel of scholars from across

Old Mill Museum



MORELAND MAYBERRY WITH LITERARY FLAIR


By W. Winston Skinner

the country.

The faith community in Moreland is also vibrant and active. People who drive through and think Moreland is a sleepy little town would be surprised to see the dozens of youngsters attending Vacation Bible School at Moreland Methodist or First Baptist of Moreland. The churches join forces for a mammoth Easter egg hunt held each year on the town square.

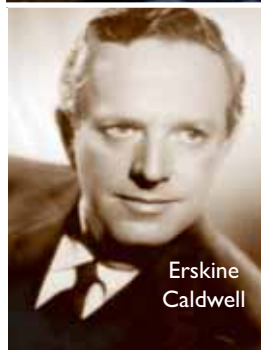
The best known ecumenical event in Moreland, however, occurs each Independence Day. Moreland Methodist, First Baptist of Moreland and White Oak Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church have been joining forces annually for more than 50 years to cook and serve succulent pork barbecue each July 4. The process requires a day of cooking hams and stirring stew prior to the event. Occasionally, the barbecue's date is adjusted to make sure church members do not have to spend a Sunday cooking or serving.

Hundreds of people flock to Moreland each July 4 to eat barbecue and to view wares for sale at the Puckett Station Arts and Crafts Festival. The festival, which takes its name from a previous moniker for the town, is put together each year by volunteers with the Moreland Community Historical Society and the Caldwell Museum. Authentic Southern small-town crafts are the focus.

In Moreland, one can smell barbecue cooking or settle down on a spacious front porch to read a book by someone with local ties. As Coweta grows, Moreland is still a wonderful place to call home. 



Grizzard
Museum



Erskine
Caldwell