

HISTORIC
SMITHONIA
Farm



Welcome to Smithonia

As soon as the Civil War was over—150 years ago—**James Monroe Smith** started digging in the dirt. With one mule, he began turning Northeast Georgia red clay. And when his crops were in the barn, he hitched that same mule to a peddler's wagon to sell tinware. In time, Col. Jim's vision, guts and hard work paid off. He owned **one of the largest farms in Georgia**, encompassing 30-square miles. The center of his agricultural empire was in Smithonia. James Monroe Smith built 17 miles of railroad tracks to haul his products to market. The rail lines, his personal rail car, sawmill, fertilizer plant, brickyard, cotton gin, schools, post office and hundreds of other structures are gone, but six historic structures—his mansion, the milk house, the hotel, the plantation's commissary and three massive brick barns—still stand in the center of this **Oglethorpe County community**. Our neighbors have done a wonderful job restoring the hotel, commissary, milk house and the mansion. Our concentration has been on these three magnificent barns. The **bricks were handmade** on Smithonia Plantation. The gigantic 65-foot heart-pine beams and trusses were cut from Col. Jim's farm. And don't forget to peer into the 12-foot in diameter, 61-foot deep, **hand-dug well** that is lined with Smithonia brick.

There's so much to see,
we're delighted you've come to visit.



James Monroe Smith

1839 - 1915

- 1839 Born in Wilkes County, Georgia
- 1857 Wins contract to cut 3,000 cross-ties for Georgia Railroad
- 1861 First Honor Graduate of Hiwassee College
Enlists in Confederate Army of East Tennessee
Discharged for medical (eye) reasons; returns to GA
- 1865 Rents Pleasant Hill Farm in Oglethorpe County
- 1866 Buys first 1,000 acres
- 1872 Expands ownership to over 8,000 acres
Builds small house
- 1874 Wins seat in Georgia State Legislature
- 1880 Builds main house, connecting to small house
- 1883 Builds first cotton seed oil mill
- 1888 Begins construction on three massive brick barns
- 1889 Builds 7-mile Smithonia/Dunlap Railroad
- 1890 Operates largest cotton gin in Georgia
- 1893 Pasha of Egypt visits Smithonia
- 1895 Four-story ginnery burns
- 1904 Donates \$75,000, joining George Foster Peabody to build Smith Hall at Normal School
- 1905 Incorporates Smithonia
- 1906 Loses bid for governor of Georgia
- 1915 Dies in his plantation house December 15

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Rich History, Natural Beauty