

The Lower Roanoke Road Trip

Call or stop by the Martin County Tourism Development Authority for assistance with this trip or with custom-designed trips.

1. Start this one-day tour in Williamston, NC at **Morningstar Nature Refuge**—by appointment— at 1967 Meadowbranch Road. Points of Interest include Wind Walker Observatory for birding, and glimpses of wildlife, research labs with microscopes, Maxine Frazier Nature Library with trail books for adults and self guided walking trails. www.morningstarrefuge.org Allow 1.5 hour minimum.



Next stop is 10 minutes away to the Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church. Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church stands at the junction of two regional roads, US Hwy 64 (business) and Hwy 17 within minutes of downtown Williamston.

2. **Skewarkey Primitive Baptist Church** Ca. 1858 *by appointment* The single story, gabled building was constructed for the farmers and merchants whose forebears settled on the south bank of the Roanoke River. The church is the oldest religious building in Martin County. At the south end of the church's tract is a small interesting cemetery. Allow 30 minutes

Next Stop is yet only 10 minutes away to the Asa Biggs House, home of the Martin County Tourism Development office. Located at 100 East Church Street in Historic Downtown Williamston.



3. **Asa Biggs House**, Ca 1831 This fascinating home of Judge Asa Biggs is an excellent example of a residence for an in town family of means. Biggs was a U.S. Senator in the 1850's. The home embodies numerous expansions. Nearly all of its interior woodwork is intact.

There is an abundant variety of local dining establishments that range from authentic country cooking (*the best collards and cornbread you ever tasted*) to seafood, and Down East barbecue. Call the Martin County Tourism Development office for more information.

Within minutes of most dining establishments in the Williamston area is the Historic Martin County Courthouse.

4. **Historic Martin County Courthouse** – This handsome 1885 Italianate building is nearly fully restored and is open by appointment

After strolling through the heritage commercial district of downtown Williamston, you can load up and head towards the Roanoke River, right off Main Street to Moratoc Park. There are a few authentic buildings on the park with a wonderful boardwalk that border the river.



5. Next you can head toward the North West quadrant of Martin County to **Historic Hamilton**, situated on the Roanoke River. In less than twenty minutes from downtown Williamston, just off Hwy 125. Hamilton is an absolute jewel, incorporated in the early Nineteenth Century and full of vibrant architectural and cultural history. There is a wealth of antebellum homes and Gothic cottages. Historic **St. Martin's Episcopal Church** is classic "carpenter Gothic" adorned with gilt paintings by David Hewson. An excellent walking and driving tour guide is available at the Martin County TDA office.

6. After visiting Hamilton, you will want to complete your day at the famous **Fort Branch Civil War site**, just four miles away. The Ft Branch situated on a high bluff overlooking the Roanoke River. It is complete with a small museum building that houses original cannons and artifacts. Other displays educate visitors about the Fort and its significance for the region during the Civil War. Fort Branch is open weekends through the Fall and by appointment otherwise



7. The first day of your lower Roanoke Road Trip can end with **wine, cheese and Martin County Peanuts** at one of Martin County's four unique Bed and Breakfast Inns!
8. In season, **Sunny Side Oyster Bar**, in Williamston is an authentic Heritage Culinary treat for nearly all seafood palates!

Call or visit the TDA office for a customized itinerary based on your personal interests.

A second-day itinerary could start with a breakfast stop at Robersonville's **Filling Station Restaurant** which provides authentic "down home" meals in a nostalgic

setting. The dining room features a signpost with directions and mileage to key locations such as San Francisco and New York.



1. Next, visit **St. James Place Southern Folk Art Museum** in historic **Robersonville**. This converted Primitive Baptist church building houses a museum grade, period collection of 19 Century N.C. pottery, quilts and folk art. By Appointment Only – Recommended time (with breakfast) is 1.5 hours
2. Backtrack on U.S. Hwy 64 east to **Jamesville** home of the famed seasonal **Cypress Grill** restaurant and just east of town, **Mackie's Ferry Peanut Emporium**. – (Recommended one hour)
3. You can easily explore equally interesting sites in nearby communities. From Jamesville proceed east to **Plymouth**, home of three major museums on Main Street: **Port o'Plymouth Civil War Museum** (one hour), **Wildlife Museum** (.75 hour), **Roanoke River Lighthouse** replica and adjacent **Maritime Museum** (1.5 hours). Include lunch at the Garden Spot restaurant downtown or the Golden Skillet located on the by-pass.
4. An alternative second day afternoon itinerary would be a trip to **Windsor** and nearby 1803 **Hope Plantation** (2 hours)
5. Choose between the **Cashie Wetlands boardwalk** downtown or the **Roanoke-Cashie River Center**.

This list does not include the **N.C. Birding Trails** sites or **Roanoke River Canoe Trails** and camping platforms. For more on these, see www.visitmartincounty.com.

