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Tour shows off Gwinnett's treasures

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LAWRENCEVILLE - Stelva Dobbins lived in Gwinnett for 25 years, but she had no idea there was a historic farm nestled around the corner from Gwinnett Place Mall.

"It's amazing to know this is planted right here," Dobbins said as she walked through McDaniel Farm Park, a former cotton farm preserved in the Duluth area.

Dobbins signed up for a historic tour Friday, the first ever sponsored by the Gwinnett History Museum, to try to introduce her mother to the county. Lila Hughes recently moved from Marietta, she said.

But instead, Dobbins said she ended up learning a lot about the place she called home for decades.

Staff Intern: Jenna Findlan

Christina and Theresa Willis, and Issy Weaver read information about the well shed during a tour of McDaniel Farm Park in Duluth on Friday. The park was one stop during the bus tour of various historic locations in Gwinnett.

"It's sad, you live in a place for so many years and don't know that much about it," she said, but she promised to bring her husband, a history buff, to the park.

were filled with Gwinnett newcomers who wanted to learn about their new community.

About 40 people set out for the tour, which wound through Lawrenceville and to historic sites in Duluth, Dacula and Buford. While a few county natives rode the large passenger bus, the seats

"We have to learn about this because this is going to be home," said Theresa Willis, who moved here from New York.

"It sounded like fun," George Sapsford said, as he toured with his wife Sheila. "This is amazing."

Jennifer Collins, who helped organize the event as part of Gwinnett's History and Preservation staff, said she was encouraged by the response, which netted a waiting list of participants. She took notes as to how to plan future tours, which she hopes can be made monthly.

"It's refreshing to know this many people care about our heritage," said Ben Satterfield, a member of the county's History and Preservation Board.

Janet Gibson said she had hoped to see some more young faces in the crowd of mostly seniors, but she added that the tour gave her a new insight into her neighborhood.

"I had no idea there was a historic home on my street," she said after the tour passed an 1821 relic built by Robert Craig. The homestead was one of the most successful farms in the county and became known as "Little Egypt" because people would come from all over the state to buy seeds there.

The historic home on Five Forks Trickum Road is now surrounded by new development, like many of the other