

backroad
drive

Union Hill - Guyer Cove in Morgan County

This is a nice “long nap length” drive. I know someone who would drive it for that purpose. She would pack a lunch, get in the big old extended cab truck, baby strapped into the car seat in the roomy back seat and take off. It was perfect because the roads had the right amount of road noise. Enough to keep a steady rumbling going. You know those freshly paved, smooth roads just aren't the thing for some babies. Nor do you want a pothole ridden road; not good at all.

The best place to start this drive or bike ride is at the intersection of Union Hill Road (County Road 32) and Guyer Cove Road. This road will cross Guyer Branch of Cotaco creek where you may spot wood ducks, hawks, or beavers. It will wind for a few miles through farmlands until you take a left on the very short Dotson Road. Dotson will become Fowler Cove Road, just go straight from the stop sign, and will run for several miles through woodlands and past farms.

One of these farms is a Cotaco Creek Watershed Project demonstration farm. It's very scenic and on a recent drive, a coyote was spotted. Come to Pines Church Road at a stop sign where you will take a left. Consult a map, GPS or google maps if you don't want to get too confused. There is more than one Fowler Cove Road in the area and there is also a Fowler Road just to add to the fun.

In a shady bend of Pines Church Road you will find Pines Church and Russell Cemetery founded in 1827. There is a recently added pond behind the church. Just past the pond is a huge old tree where an old deserted house stood until the past couple of years, covered in wisteria. Not far past the

pond will be Pine Road where you will take a left.

I haven't located a date for the founding of Pines Church, but

I did locate information regarding Russell Cemetery, across the street from the church.

Electious Thompson, 1755 - 1840, Revolutionary War veteran is buried here. He lived in Morgan County from 1823(according to sources) until his death. Pine Road is a nice drive where you'll pass both swampy area and farms. A creek runs down from Newsome Sinks and flows into Cotaco Creek where mallards or wood ducks may be sighted.

Past the swamp is an old farm where silos stand side-by-side. I can't recall seeing silos of this sort anywhere else. Just past this farm, Pine Road intersects Apple Grove Road. Any direction will be a scenic drive, but if you're doing this one to its completion, cross Apple Grove to Pine Ridge Road. This windy little road will pass Hughes spring coming from the rocks in the mountain side.

In spring and summer, Oakleaf Hydrangea is plentiful here. It is a gorgeous spot, but unfortu-



nately a dumping ground for trash and graffiti, in addition to pets. Hughes Spring flows from Hughes Cave, a salt peter cave during the Civil War.

The cave was the site of social gatherings long ago. This area is part of the Newsome Sinks, listed in the National Register of Natural Landmarks in 1973. It is said to be home to some endangered species of wildflowers.

This road will wind up the mountain, watch closely when you reach the top. On the right is a narrow canyon, which is extremely difficult to see from the road. There is a pond, called Lynn Mill Pond, with water running over the dam. During rainy seasons, the water rushes through and runs over the sides of the canyon.

It is nearly impossible to get a picture of it, with no place to park and fencing along the road. It is private property, so be content with whatever you can glimpse from the road. If you follow Pine Ridge Road in its entirety, you'll end up at U.S. 231. There are plenty of other little roads

to take if you wish. And you will find Christine's German Bake Shop at 1493 Apple Grove Road. Very good, but check the hours. Currently it is open Wednesday - Friday, from noon til+6. Saturday 10 a.m. til 4 p.m.

