



That's my "MoMo," third from left. I'm on her right. (Yes, with the flip.) We're at her house in Indianola, Mississippi where, as a child, I spent hours playing under her kitchen table while listening to adults telling stories and gossiping. I think that's what started me on the road to becoming a storyteller. I know for sure it's where I learned to love small, southern towns and began to yearn for a southern hometown of my own.

It's that sense of home and belonging that I hoped to share in *Falling Home*—but I needed the right place. Inspired by a visit to Monroe, Georgia, just an hour from my home, I created the town of Walton. I just plain fell for the feel of Monroe. It came closest to the way I felt when visiting my grandmother. Even before I got a good look at the antebellum houses and other historic buildings, I knew I'd found my "Walton."

Karen



This Georgia home (left) is built in the Antebellum style that is so familiar to southerners. It graces mansions, city houses and more modest family homes.



The Walton County Courthouse is a Greek Revival style building built in 1845. It is at the heart of Monroe's historic district.



The Davis-Edwards House in Monroe, built in 1880 in the Transitional Federal style.



Downtowns such as this, very much like Monroe's—and now Walton's—are at the heart of many small southern communities.



The magnolia, the state flower of Mississippi, thrives throughout the south, including Monroe and Karen's hometown, Atlanta.



Cotton fields, once dominant, abound in Indianola and in the rest of the Delta, as do fields of soybeans, rice, and corn.



Once the home of Georgia Governor Henry McDaniel, Monroe's McDaniel-Tiechenor House (left) was built in 1887 in the Victorian Italianate Villa style. In the 1930s it was remodeled in the Neo-Classical style.

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