

**THE GEORGIA REAL ESTATE
ESSENTIALS SERIES**

INHERITED PROPERTY IN GEORGIA

**What to Do When
You've Inherited a Home**



**BY THE CORBIN REAL ESTATE TEAM
RON & ADDISON CORBIN**

Inherited Property in Georgia

What to Do When You've Inherited a Home

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The Georgia Real Estate Essentials Series

BY THE CORBIN TEAM

RON & ADDISON CORBIN

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About This Series

The Georgia Real Estate Essentials Series

By The Corbin Real Estate Team – Ron & Addison Corbin

Buying or selling a home in Georgia is a big decision—and for most people, it's the biggest financial move they'll ever make. But too often, the process feels overwhelming, confusing, or just plain frustrating.

That's why we created this book series.

At **The Corbin Real Estate Team**, we've spent years helping Georgia families buy and sell homes with clarity, confidence, and a winning strategy. These books are designed to give you straight answers, practical advice, and a few inside tips—no sales fluff, no confusing jargon.

Each guide in the *Georgia Real Estate Essentials Series* focuses on a specific moment or challenge in your real estate journey. Whether you're buying your first home, prepping for a fast sale, inheriting a property, or recovering from an expired listing, we've got your back.

We wrote these books to:

- Help you make informed, confident real estate decisions
- Show you exactly what to expect at every step
- Share the smart strategies we use every day with our own clients
- And yes—if it feels like a good fit, we'd love the chance to work with you too

This isn't just another real estate guide. It's a Georgia-specific playbook, written by two brokers who live here, work here, and know how to get homes sold in *your* neighborhood.

Let's get to it.

— Ron & Addison Corbin

The Corbin Real Estate Team

Core Real Estate Series – For Every Buyer & Seller

1. **Selling Smart: How to Sell Your Georgia Home Fast & for Top Dollar**
Your complete guide to getting the most for your home—without stress or surprises.
 2. **The Georgia Home Buyer's Handbook: What to Know Before You Buy**
Avoid costly mistakes and buy with confidence in the Peach State.
 3. **Back on the Market: How to Sell Your Georgia Home After It Didn't Sell the First Time**
Learn why your listing expired—and how to get it right the second time around.
 4. **From FSBO to Sold: Why Georgia Homeowners Hire the Right Agent (Eventually)**
The honest truth about going it alone—and what to do when it's not working.
 5. **The Ultimate Guide to Georgia Real Estate: From Search to Sold**
An all-in-one resource for navigating the Georgia market like a pro.
 6. **Smart Moves: How to Time Your Georgia Real Estate Transaction Just Right**
Buy, sell, and relocate with confidence—without the panic, overlap, or missed opportunity.
 7. **The Georgia Land Guide: Buying and Selling Lots, Acreage, and Rural Property the Smart Way**
A practical guide to buying, selling, and evaluating Georgia land—from zoning to perc tests and everything in between.
-

Life Events Series – Emotional & Transactional Guidance

8. **Selling Your Georgia Home in a Divorce: A Clear Plan for a Clean Break**
Navigate the legal, emotional, and financial complexities of selling during a split.
 9. **Inherited Property in Georgia: What to Do When You've Inherited a Home**
Probate, prep, pricing, and peace of mind—your guide to selling a home you didn't plan to own.
 10. **Downsizing in Georgia: How to Right-Size Your Life Without the Stress**
Smart steps for selling your current home and moving into a lifestyle that fits.
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Lifestyle-Based Guides

11. **First-Time Buyer in Georgia? Start Here**
Everything a Georgia first-timer needs to know—from financing to keys in hand.
 12. **Your Empty Nest, Your Next Nest: A Georgia Homeowner's Guide**
Guidance for empty nesters ready to sell, relocate, or reimagine their next chapter.
 13. **Relocating to Georgia? A Welcome Guide for Newcomers**
From neighborhoods to contracts—what new residents need to succeed in Georgia.
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Investor & Upscaler Series

14. Real Estate Investing in Georgia: Buy, Rent, Profit

Learn the Georgia-specific rules, risks, and rewards of building your portfolio.

15. Upgrade Without the Overwhelm: Selling & Buying Simultaneously in Georgia

Juggle both transactions like a pro—without losing your sanity or your equity.



Home Prep & Marketing Mini-Guides

16. Stage, Snap, Sell: Prepping Your Georgia Home for a Hot Market

Declutter, stage, and photograph like the pros—for faster, stronger offers.

17. Real Estate Red Flags: What Georgia Buyers Should Watch For

Avoid costly surprises with a keen eye for common listing issues.

18. Your Home's Secret Value: Small Upgrades, Big Return

Budget-friendly improvements that boost appeal and ROI in Georgia markets.



How the Corbin Team is Different - Bonus Titles

19. Behind the Sale: What Georgia Real Estate Agents Really Do for You

A transparent look at how agents earn their keep—and protect your interests.

20. From For Sale to Sold: How We Help Georgia Homeowners Win

Real-world results from the Corbin Team playbook.

21. Our Georgia Real Estate Playbook: How Addison & Ron Get Results

The tools, timelines, and strategies that set our team apart.

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Preface: Why We Wrote This Book

A note from Ron & Addison Corbin

We've worked with a lot of Georgia families over the years. But there's a specific type of client we see more and more often—someone who just inherited a house and isn't quite sure what to do next.

Sometimes they're grieving. Sometimes they're overwhelmed.

Often, they've never sold a home before—much less one they didn't buy.

And almost always, they say the same thing:

"I just want to do this right."

We wrote this book for you—whether you inherited your childhood home, a rental property, or something unexpected from a distant relative. This guide is here to help you navigate the emotional, legal, and financial parts of inheriting real estate in Georgia with clarity and confidence.

Why Inheriting a Home Can Feel Overwhelming

Inheriting a home may sound like a blessing—and sometimes it is. But it can also feel like a burden when you're faced with:

- Probate paperwork
- Family disagreements
- Maintenance issues
- Outdated mortgages
- Uncertainty about the property's value or future

The emotional side is just as complex. Maybe you're struggling with the loss of a loved one. Maybe you're unsure what to do with the memories inside the walls. Or maybe you're trying to honor someone's legacy while also being practical about what's best for your own future.

This book won't take away those challenges—but it *will* give you a step-by-step process to manage them.

Why This Book is Different

There are plenty of legal blogs and tax guides out there. But this isn't one of them.

Instead, this is a **real-world roadmap**, written by two Georgia real estate professionals who've walked hundreds of clients through this very situation. It's designed to help you:

- Understand your options
- Avoid costly mistakes
- Handle disagreements respectfully
- Get the best outcome—whether that's keeping, renting, or selling the home

We'll use simple language, clear examples, and practical steps you can follow—even if you're still working through probate or sharing decisions with siblings or other heirs.

What You'll Learn

We'll start with what to do the moment you find out you've inherited a home. Then we'll guide you through everything that comes next:

- Understanding probate in Georgia

- Confirming legal ownership
- Evaluating the home's condition and value
- Preparing it for sale—or tenants—if needed
- Selling it for the best possible outcome
- Navigating family dynamics and disagreements along the way

And most importantly, we'll help you *not* feel rushed, lost, or alone in the process.

Our Promise to You

We know this isn't just about property. It's about people.

And we're here to make sure you feel supported from start to finish.

If you're ready, let's begin with the moment most people find themselves in:

"I just inherited a house. Now what?"



Chapter 1: Inheritance Shock — “I Just Inherited a House. Now What?”

Your first steps matter—and no, you don’t need to renovate, list, or panic.

If you’ve just inherited a home in Georgia, the first thing we want you to hear is this:

Take a breath. You don’t have to make any major decisions today.

Many people think they need to act quickly—change the locks, fix things up, or rush to put it on the market. But the truth is, your very first steps should be about **understanding**, not acting.

This chapter will walk you through what to do (and what *not* to do) right after you inherit a home—whether it was expected or not.

Step 1: Don't Rush Into Renovations or Listing the Property

One of the most common mistakes we see is this:

Someone inherits a home, walks in, and immediately starts making changes.

Maybe it's ripping up the old carpet. Maybe it's talking to a contractor.

Or worse—someone calls an agent and lists it before probate is complete.

Pause.

Why? Because until you confirm:

- Who legally owns the home
- Whether probate is required
- What the home is actually worth
- What your long-term options are

...any major decisions are premature—and potentially expensive.

Step 2: Secure the Property

This doesn't mean you have to move in or remodel it.

Just make sure it's safe and accounted for.

Here's what to do in the first few days:

- **Change the locks**, especially if the home was vacant or had multiple key holders
- **Shut off unnecessary utilities** (or transfer them to an active account)
- **Check for active insurance coverage** — vacant homes often need special policies
- **Walk the property** and document anything valuable, damaged, or concerning

✓ *Case Example:*

One client inherited her father's home in McDonough. She waited two months to visit it—only to discover the water heater had leaked, causing thousands in mold damage. A simple walk-through early on could have saved her time and money.

Step 3: Gather Key Information

Before anything else, you'll want to start collecting documents and information related to the home. These will help in probate, property transfer, or future sale.

Here's a basic list:

- The **will**, if one exists
- **Death certificate**
- **Mortgage statements**
- **Property tax bills**
- **Homeowner's insurance policy**
- **Utility account information**
- Any existing **deeds, titles, or trust documents**

It's also helpful to gather:

- Names and contact info of all heirs or named beneficiaries
- Keys, garage remotes, and security codes
- A list of personal property inside the home (furniture, collectibles, etc.)

If you're working with an estate attorney or executor, they may already have some of this on hand.

Step 4: Understand Your Role

Are you the sole heir? One of several? The executor?

Your role determines what you can (and can't) do right now.

Here's a quick breakdown:

- **Executor:** Named in the will or appointed by the court to manage the estate
- **Administrator:** Same as executor, but used when there is *no* will
- **Heir or beneficiary:** Someone legally entitled to part of the estate

If you're *not* the executor or administrator, you probably won't be able to sell or make legal decisions about the house until probate is complete.



If you're unsure of your role, call the probate court in the Georgia county where the deceased lived. They can tell you if probate has been filed and what's happening with the estate.

Step 5: Let Emotions Settle Before You Decide Anything Big

Inheriting a house is emotional—whether it's your parents' home, a rental property, or a house full of memories. It's okay to feel unsure, overwhelmed, or even conflicted.

We often tell our clients: **just because you inherited a home doesn't mean you have to keep it—or sell it—right away.**

Give yourself time to:

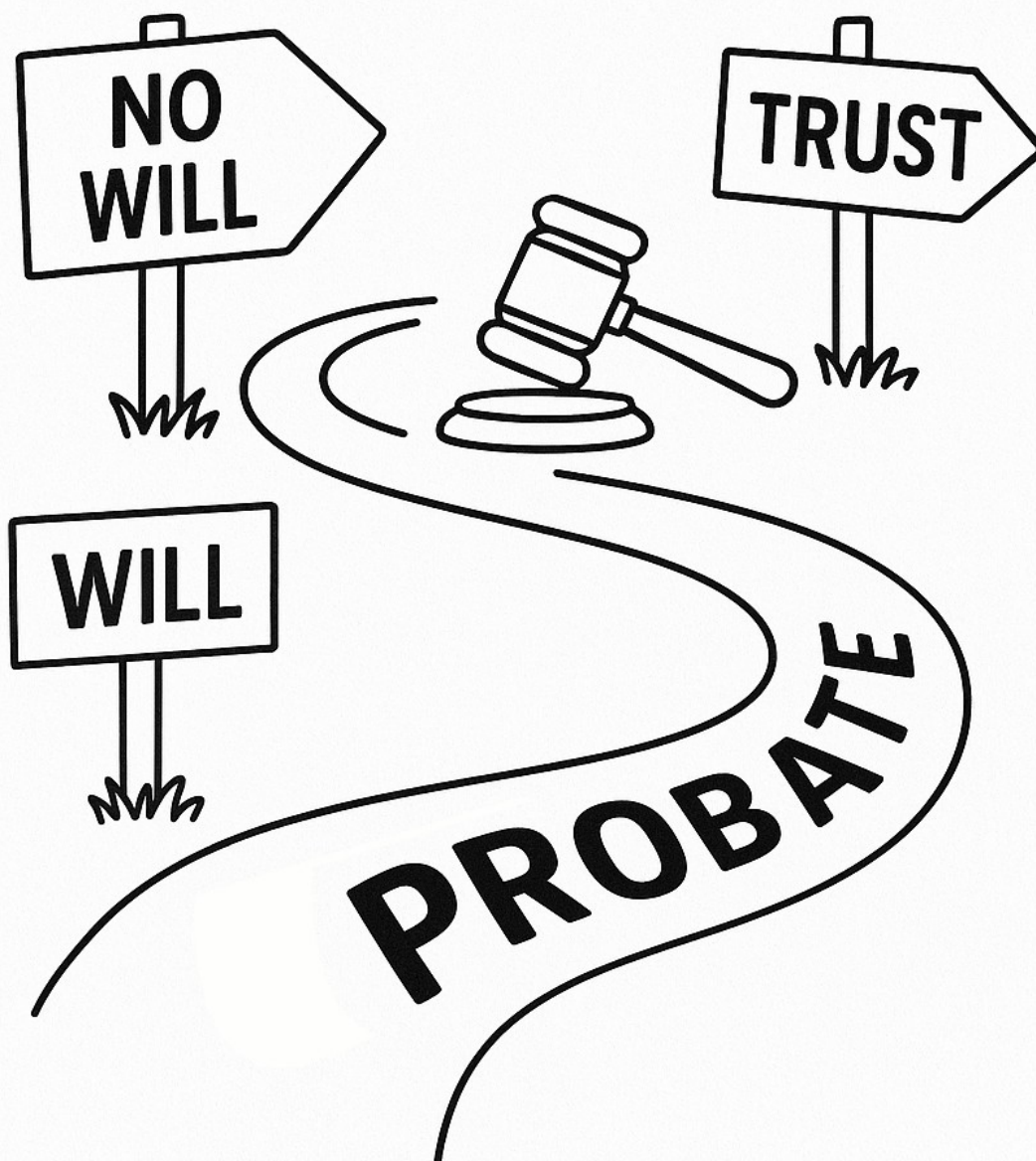
- Process your loss
- Talk with family members
- Explore your options
- Get professional advice

Quick Recap: First 5 Moves

Here's your Day-One Checklist:

- ✓ Secure the home (locks, insurance, utilities)
- ✓ Document and inventory the property
- ✓ Gather legal and financial paperwork
- ✓ Understand your role in the estate
- ✓ Hold off on major decisions until you have clarity

In the next chapter, we'll break down the **Georgia probate process**—what it is, when it's required, and how to move through it efficiently.



Chapter 2: Understanding Probate in Georgia

What It Is, When It's Required, and How to Keep It From Becoming a Roadblock

You've inherited a home, but before you can sell it, rent it, or even fully claim it, there's a legal step that needs attention: **probate**.

Probate is the court-supervised process that validates a will (if there is one), identifies heirs, settles debts, and distributes assets—including real estate. In Georgia, probate can be straightforward—or incredibly messy—depending on how things were set up.

This chapter breaks down what you need to know about the probate process, how it impacts inherited property, and what you can do to keep things moving.

What Is Probate, Exactly?

Probate is the legal process by which a deceased person's estate is administered. It ensures that:

- The person's debts are paid
- Their remaining assets are distributed to the correct people
- Any disputes are resolved under the court's oversight

In Georgia, probate is handled through the **county probate court** where the deceased person lived.

Is Probate Always Required?

Not always. That depends on how the home was titled and whether a valid will or trust exists.

Let's walk through some common scenarios:

✓ Scenario 1: The home was in the name of a trust

If the property was titled in a **living trust**, probate can often be avoided. The successor trustee can transfer or sell the property according to the trust instructions.

✓ Scenario 2: The home was jointly owned with rights of survivorship

If the deceased person owned the home jointly with a spouse or another person, the home typically passes automatically to the surviving owner. No probate needed.

! Scenario 3: The home was solely in the deceased's name

This is the most common—and it **does require probate** in Georgia, especially if the estate is valued over \$10,000 and no trust is involved.

! Scenario 4: There's no will at all

This is called **intestate succession**. The probate court will distribute the estate based on Georgia inheritance laws. This may include spouses, children, parents, or even more distant relatives.

Example:

Linda's father passed away, leaving his Fayetteville home solely in his name. No trust, no co-owner. Linda and her two siblings had to go through probate—even though he left a simple will naming them as beneficiaries.

How Long Does Probate Take in Georgia?

It depends. A smooth case with no disputes can be resolved in as little as **six months**.

But if there are disagreements among heirs, creditors, or missing documents, it can take **a year or more**.

Factors that affect the timeline:

- Whether there's a valid will
- How many heirs are involved
- If anyone contests the estate
- Whether all debts and taxes are settled
- How well organized the estate paperwork is



Pro Tip:

Don't wait until probate is done to start preparing the home for sale. You can clean, secure, and even evaluate the home's value during the process—just hold off on listing it.

What's the Executor or Administrator's Role?

The executor (named in a will) or administrator (appointed if there is no will) has legal authority to:

- Collect and secure assets
- Pay debts and taxes
- Distribute property
- Sell the home (if needed)

If you are the executor, we strongly recommend working with a Georgia probate attorney to make sure everything is filed correctly.

If you're **not** the executor, you'll need to coordinate through that person to make decisions about the home.

Can You Sell a Home During Probate?

In most cases, yes—but it depends on how the estate is structured.

You'll need:

- Approval from the executor or administrator
- Agreement from all heirs (or legal authority from the court)
- Clear title (more on that in Chapter 3)

In some cases, a judge may need to approve the sale if there's a dispute, but in Georgia, many probate sales can proceed with minimal court involvement if everyone is in agreement.

Don't Let Probate Stall the Process

Here's what we tell our clients:

“You don’t need to fear probate—you just need to respect the process.”

The biggest mistake we see? Waiting until probate is fully complete to even start planning. That leads to delays, missed market opportunities, and unnecessary stress.

What you *can* do while probate is in progress:

- Schedule a CMA (Comparative Market Analysis)
- Clean out the home
- Begin gathering repair estimates
- Get insurance in place
- Communicate with heirs about goals and expectations

Summary: What You Should Do Now

- ✓ Find out if probate has been started
- ✓ Identify who the executor or administrator is
- ✓ Gather a copy of the will (if one exists)
- ✓ Contact the local probate court for guidance
- ✓ Begin home preparations while awaiting court permissions

In the next chapter, we’ll explore what “ownership” really means after someone passes—because just inheriting a home doesn’t always mean you can sell it right away.



Chapter 3: Who Actually Owns the House?

Legal Ownership vs. Emotional Ownership—and Why It Matters More Than You Think

Just because a family member passed down a home in their will—or even said you could have it—doesn't mean it's legally yours yet.

In Georgia, real estate ownership must be **legally transferred**, and that process is often more complex than people expect. This chapter breaks down how to determine true ownership, what happens when multiple heirs are involved, and how to resolve title issues that can delay your plans.

The Problem With “It’s Ours Now”

Many families assume that once someone passes and names them in the will, they’re instantly the new owners. But under Georgia law, **property isn’t officially transferred until probate is complete** or a valid title change is recorded.

Until then, you may be listed as a beneficiary—but not the legal owner.

Here’s what that means:

- You can’t sell the property
- You may not be able to refinance or insure it
- You could be legally vulnerable if something happens on-site (e.g., injury, break-in, damage)

Example:

After their mother passed, two brothers in Cumming assumed they could sell the home. But because it was still titled in her name—and they hadn’t completed probate—the sale was delayed for months. Worse, a pipe burst during that time, and the insurance claim was denied because the policy was still under her name.

Determine How the Property Was Titled

The first thing you need to do is check the deed. It will tell you a lot about ownership and what happens next.

Scenarios:

1. Sole Ownership

If the deceased was the only person on the deed, the home goes through probate and is distributed according to the will—or Georgia inheritance laws if no will exists.

2. Joint Tenancy with Right of Survivorship

If two or more people were listed on the deed **with rights of survivorship**, ownership automatically transfers to the surviving owner. No probate needed.

3. Tenants in Common

This is common when multiple family members own a property. If one passes, their share goes to their estate—not automatically to the others. That means **probate is required** to pass that share to heirs.

4. Owned by a Trust

If the home was held in a living trust, ownership passes directly to the named successor or beneficiary. This usually avoids probate altogether.

You can obtain a copy of the deed from the **county clerk of superior court** where the property is located.

Multiple Heirs = Shared Ownership

If the will (or Georgia law) names multiple people as beneficiaries of the home, they all have **equal legal rights** unless stated otherwise.

This means:

- No one person can sell the home without the others' agreement
- Repairs, expenses, and decisions must be shared
- Disagreements can cause delays—or worse, lawsuits

△ *Example:*

Three cousins inherited their grandmother's house in Decatur. One wanted to keep it, one wanted to rent it, and one wanted to sell. The property sat vacant for over a year before a judge intervened. By then, market conditions had changed—and they lost over \$20,000 in potential equity.

What If One Heir Wants Out?

If you're one of several heirs and you don't want to co-own the home, there are a few options:

1. **Sell your share** to the others
2. **Buy them out** if you want to keep the home
3. **Agree to sell and divide proceeds**
4. **Request a partition sale through court** (last resort)

This is where having a **neutral real estate professional** can help facilitate options and avoid escalation.

Check for Liens, Taxes, or Other Title Issues

Even if the property has passed to you legally, you may not have **clear title** if:

- There are unpaid property taxes
- There's an old mortgage still recorded
- The deed was never properly recorded after probate

Before listing or refinancing, we recommend a **title search**. This will uncover any claims or issues that could derail a closing.

We can connect you with trusted local title companies who specialize in estate property.

What You Can Do Right Now

- ✓ Request a copy of the current deed
- ✓ Confirm how the title is held (joint, trust, sole ownership)
- ✓ Identify all heirs or beneficiaries with a share in the property
- ✓ Talk to a real estate attorney or title company if the ownership is unclear
- ✓ Start the conversation with co-heirs early—before decisions are made

In the next chapter, we'll help you and your family evaluate the big question: should you **keep**, **rent**, or **sell** the inherited home—and what each path really looks like.



Chapter 4: Deciding Whether to Keep, Sell, or Rent

How to Make a Smart, Unified Decision That Serves Everyone's Best Interests

Once you understand who legally owns the home and where it stands in the probate process, the next big decision is what to do with it.

- **Keep it and move in?**
- **Sell it and divide the proceeds?**
- **Rent it out as an income property?**

Each option has emotional and financial implications, especially when more than one heir is involved. In this chapter, we'll help you think through all three paths—so you can make a decision that's practical, respectful, and informed.

Step 1: Get Clear on What Each Option Means

Let's break down the pros, cons, and common scenarios of each route.



Option 1: Keep the Home (As a Primary Residence)

This is often the first idea that comes to mind, especially when there's sentimental value. But keeping the home means **assuming full responsibility**—and often requires buying out other heirs.



Pros:

- Preserve family memories
- No need to move or rent elsewhere
- Retain long-term appreciation of the property

Cons:

- Requires agreement from all heirs
- May require refinancing and buyouts
- You're responsible for all upkeep, taxes, insurance, and mortgage



Real Example:

A client in McDonough inherited her father's home along with her two brothers. She wanted to keep the home and raise her kids there. After an appraisal and CMA, she refinanced and paid her brothers their share of the equity. The key? Transparency, early communication, and support from a neutral real estate team.



Option 2: Sell the Home and Divide the Proceeds

This is the most common and cleanest route—especially when multiple people inherit the home and no one wants to live in it.



Pros:

- Avoids long-term co-ownership headaches
- Converts property value into usable cash
- Fair and final: everyone gets their share and moves on

Cons:

- Can stir up emotions or disagreements about price, timing, or prep
- Requires cooperation among all heirs
- Some families feel guilty about selling a “legacy” home

Tip:

If there’s tension among heirs, we recommend a structured sale agreement—where all parties sign off on the listing price, repairs, and expected net proceeds. We help families create this kind of agreement all the time.

Option 3: Rent the Home Out

Some families choose to keep the home as a rental—either short-term while the market improves or as a long-term income stream.

Pros:

- Steady cash flow (if managed well)
- Retains ownership for future generations
- Can offset costs like taxes, maintenance, and insurance

Cons:

- Requires active property management
- Must split profits (and expenses) among heirs
- Still need a plan for who handles what—and what happens if someone wants out

Case Study:

Four cousins in Henry County inherited a home and agreed to rent it out. But within a year, one cousin wanted their share in cash. They hadn’t planned for a buyout structure, which led to resentment and a forced sale. Lesson learned: rental agreements among heirs need to be detailed and legally documented.

Step 2: Consider These Key Questions

Before deciding, ask yourselves (and one another):

- Does anyone want to live in the home?
- Can someone afford to buy out the others?
- What’s the home worth today?
- Is the property in rent-ready condition?

- How well do we communicate and make decisions as a group?
-

Step 3: Use a CMA to Anchor the Conversation

A **Comparative Market Analysis** (CMA) can help ground the discussion in real numbers.

We provide free CMAs for inherited homes in Georgia, including:

- Recent sales of similar properties
- Market trends and pricing guidance
- Suggested list price if selling
- Estimated rent value if renting

When emotions run high, numbers can bring clarity.

Step 4: Make a Written Plan

Whatever you choose, get it in writing. This avoids confusion or second-guessing later.

We can help draft:

- Basic co-ownership agreements
 - Rental partnership outlines
 - Listing authorization forms with shared terms
 - Buyout memos and equity split agreements
-

Our Role as Your Real Estate Team

We're here to help all parties feel heard and supported—while also moving toward a clear outcome. That means:

- Neutral communication with multiple heirs
 - Transparent timelines and updates
 - Expert guidance through pricing, staging, and sale or rental
-

Summary: Next Steps

- ✓ Discuss the three options with all decision-makers
- ✓ Request a CMA to inform your choice
- ✓ Decide on a path that's realistic for everyone

- ✓ Put your decision and responsibilities in writing
 - ✓ Prepare emotionally and financially for what's ahead
-

In the next chapter, we'll help you figure out **what the home is actually worth**—and why that number may be different than you expect.



Chapter 5: What the Home Is Really Worth

Don't Guess. Don't Rely on Zillow. Get the Facts—Georgia Style.

One of the most important steps in dealing with inherited property is figuring out **how much it's actually worth**. Not what it was worth five years ago. Not what your cousin says it's worth. Not what Zillow suggests.

We're talking about a **real, local, market-based value**—because everything from tax planning to equity distribution to timing your sale depends on it.

In this chapter, we'll walk you through:

- How property value is determined
 - The difference between appraisals, CMAs, and online estimates
 - Real-life examples of value surprises
 - And how to avoid letting assumptions cost you thousands
-

Why Accurate Valuation Matters More Than You Think

A proper valuation affects:

- Whether you sell, rent, or refinance
- How much each heir receives in a sale
- What taxes (if any) you may owe
- How the home compares to others in your neighborhood and price range

△ Quick Example:

We worked with a family in Gwinnett who thought their late aunt's home was worth around \$175,000—based on what she told them before she passed. Our market analysis showed it was worth \$240,000. That's a \$65,000 difference, and it changed everything about their plans.

Appraisal vs CMA vs Online Estimate: What's the Difference?

Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

This is what we provide as real estate professionals. It's a free, detailed report comparing your inherited home to recent sales of similar properties in the area.

It includes:

- Active, pending, and sold listings
- Adjustments for square footage, condition, and features
- Local market trends
- Suggested list price range

Best for: **Decision-making before listing or renting**

Appraisal

A formal valuation by a licensed appraiser, typically required by banks for loans or refinancing. Appraisers follow specific lending guidelines and use precise data models.

It includes:

- Adjusted value based on condition, comps, and market
- Final number used in legal or financial decisions
- Can cost \$400–\$700 in Georgia

Best for: **Legal disputes, estate filings, or refinancing**

Online Estimate (Zillow, Redfin, etc.)

These use public data and algorithms to generate a quick guess at home value—but they don’t know the condition, location nuances, or recent upgrades.

Often off by tens of thousands of dollars.

Best for: **Ballpark estimate only—not for real decisions**

When to Use a CMA vs an Appraisal

Scenario	Use a CMA	Use an Appraisal
You’re deciding whether to sell	✓	
You’re dividing equity among heirs	✓	✓ (if contested)
You’re refinancing the home		✓
You’re filing estate paperwork		✓ (required in some counties)
You’re just curious	✓	

 **Tip:** We usually start with a CMA. If more precision is needed—or a lender or court requires it—we help coordinate with a trusted Georgia appraiser.

What Affects the Home’s Value?

Several key factors determine what your inherited home is really worth:

- **Location:** City, school district, neighborhood appeal
- **Condition:** Age of roof, HVAC, flooring, layout
- **Updates:** Kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring upgrades boost value
- **Curb Appeal:** First impressions matter more than you think
- **Market Conditions:** Are prices rising, flat, or cooling?

Sometimes the home has deferred maintenance or outdated finishes. Other times, it’s a time capsule that buyers love. Either way, the market will tell you the truth—and we help you read it clearly.

Real-Life Georgia Examples

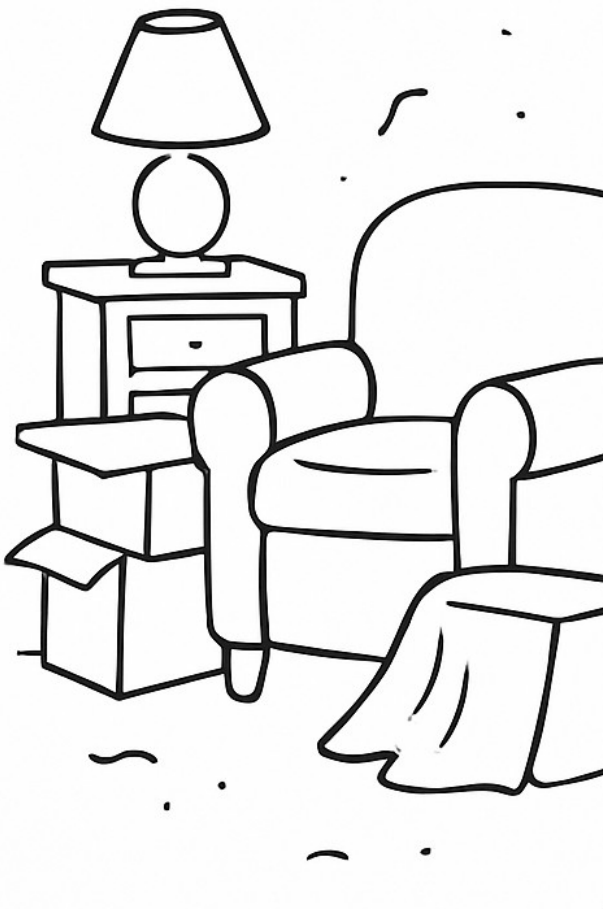
- **Stockbridge:** A 1980s ranch sat unoccupied for a year. The family thought it was unsellable. After light cleaning, yard work, and virtual staging, it sold for \$312K—\$40K above their initial estimate.
 - **Decatur:** A client priced the home based on Zillow’s estimate and had no offers for 3 months. After relisting with our strategic pricing plan based on a CMA, the home sold in 8 days.
-

What to Do Right Now

- ✓ Request a free CMA from a local agent (we do this all the time)
 - ✓ Review recent sales in the neighborhood—not just listings
 - ✓ Consider a formal appraisal if legal filings or disputes are involved
 - ✓ Don’t guess—your decisions are only as good as the data behind them
-

In the next chapter, we’ll help you **get the home ready**—whether you plan to sell, rent, or simply protect it while probate is underway.

CLUTTERED



CLEAN & PREPPED



Chapter 6: Prepping the Home for Sale (or Tenants)

How to Clean, Secure, and Stage a Home Without Losing Your Mind—or Your Inheritance

Whether you're preparing to sell or planning to rent out the property, one thing is certain: inherited homes usually need **a little work before they go on the market.**

Sometimes that means sorting through a lifetime of belongings.

Other times it means dealing with deferred maintenance, outdated décor, or even a few surprises behind the walls.

The good news? You don't have to do it all alone—and you don't have to do it all at once. In this chapter, we'll guide you through a smart, step-by-step process to get the home ready for listing or renting, without unnecessary stress or overspending.

Step 1: Clean Out the Personal Items—With Care

Most inherited homes come with furniture, keepsakes, paperwork, and more. Your first task is deciding what to keep, donate, toss, or sell.

Start with:

- Important documents (wills, insurance, tax records, deeds, etc.)
- Photos and irreplaceable family heirlooms
- Medications and hazardous materials (dispose safely)
- Items with resale value (collectibles, antiques, art)

💡 *Tip:* Create four labeled zones or bins: **Keep, Donate, Sell, Trash**. This keeps decisions easier—and avoids backtracking later.

What About an Estate Sale?

If the home is full of furniture, decor, or collectibles, a professional **estate sale company** can:

- Inventory and price items
- Handle advertising and hosting the sale
- Split profits (usually 30-40% commission)

This can save you time, emotional energy, and arguments among heirs over who gets what.

🔪 *Real Example:*

In Fayette County, three siblings inherited their mother's fully furnished home. Instead of dividing the furniture piece by piece, they hired an estate sale company, made \$12,000 in a weekend, and split it evenly.

Step 2: Secure the Property

Vacant homes attract problems—especially if they look obviously unoccupied.

Here's what we recommend:

- Change the locks
- Add exterior lighting and motion sensors
- Forward the mail or stop delivery

- Remove signs of vacancy (stacked newspapers, overgrown lawns)
 - Maintain insurance with **vacancy coverage** if no one is living there
-

Step 3: Address Deferred Maintenance

Before listing or renting, make sure the home is **safe, functional, and marketable**.

Here's a simple repair checklist:

- Roof leaks or damage
- Plumbing issues or water damage
- HVAC system function
- Flooring condition (trip hazards, stains)
- Outdated or dangerous electrical panels

Not everything has to be brand-new—but it does need to pass inspection and feel move-in ready.

Step 4: Deep Clean and Declutter

Buyers and tenants alike want a space that feels clean, fresh, and easy to imagine themselves in. This includes:

- Removing worn or mismatched furniture
- Neutralizing décor (especially religious, political, or personal items)
- Deep cleaning bathrooms, kitchens, carpets, and baseboards

We can recommend trusted local cleaners and junk removal services.

Step 5: Consider Staging—or Virtual Staging

Staging makes a home look bigger, brighter, and more appealing. For inherited homes, this is especially helpful because:

- Many are dated or filled with mismatched furniture
- Vacant rooms can look cold and uninviting
- You may not be nearby to manage the process

Virtual staging is often the best option for out-of-state heirs. We digitally furnish rooms using modern design software so online buyers can envision the space without moving a single chair.

 **Tip:** Homes with virtual staging and professional photography get more views, more showings, and better offers—especially in a competitive Georgia market.

Step 6: Don't Overspend on Upgrades

Inherited homes can easily become money pits if you try to do a full remodel. Focus instead on **high-impact, low-cost improvements**, like:

- Fresh paint in neutral tones
- New light fixtures or cabinet hardware
- Landscaping touch-ups for curb appeal
- Power washing driveways and siding

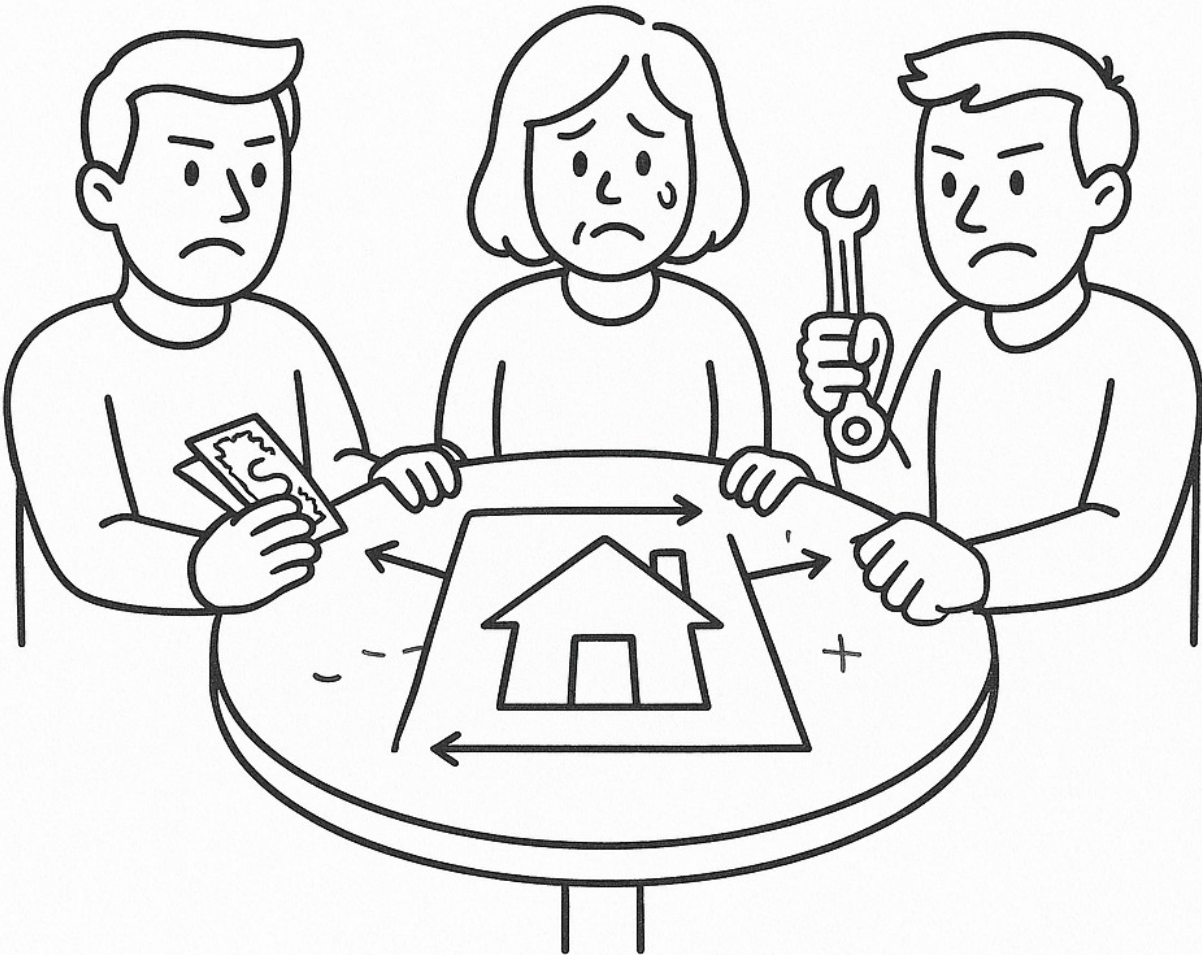
We'll give you a tailored prep plan that matches your home's condition, your budget, and your sale or rental goals.

Summary: Your Prep Checklist

- ✓ Remove personal items and organize remaining contents
- ✓ Secure the property and maintain insurance
- ✓ Make key repairs (prioritize safety and functionality)
- ✓ Clean, declutter, and neutralize the home
- ✓ Stage or virtually stage the space
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary renovations—maximize ROI

In the next chapter, we'll dive into something that derails a lot of estate sales: **family conflict**. Learn how to handle disagreements between heirs with grace, and how a good real estate team can keep everyone on track.

FAMILY CONFLICT



Chapter 7: Navigating Family Conflict with Grace

How to Move Forward When Heirs Don't See Eye to Eye

If you've inherited a home with siblings, cousins, or other family members, chances are someone has a strong opinion.

- "We should keep it in the family."
- "Let's sell it right away."
- "I want to renovate it and rent it."
- "No one's touching it—Mom wouldn't have wanted that."

Sound familiar?

Inheriting property with others can bring up old memories, unresolved tensions, and totally different priorities. But disagreement doesn't have to mean disaster. With the right approach—and the right support—you can preserve your relationships *and* protect the value of the home.

Why Conflict Happens

Most people don't expect conflict. After all, you're family, right?

But when you inherit real estate, you're not just dealing with grief. You're also dealing with:

- Differing financial situations
- Emotional attachments
- Varying levels of involvement
- Misunderstandings about ownership and legal rights

 *Case Example:*

Two sisters in Roswell inherited their mother's home. One wanted to keep it as a vacation rental. The other, struggling financially, needed her share in cash. They didn't speak for months—until they brought in a neutral agent (us) to help them see the options objectively. In the end, they agreed to sell and both walked away feeling respected.

Step 1: Get the Facts First

Before discussing what to do, everyone needs to understand:

- Who legally owns what
- What the home is actually worth
- What costs are involved in keeping or selling it
- What legal obligations still exist (like probate or liens)

We often start family conversations with a **CMA and basic cost estimate**, so everyone is reacting to facts—not assumptions.

Step 2: Communicate Openly, but with Boundaries

It's helpful to designate a **lead communicator** (usually the executor or one agreed-upon sibling) to manage updates and logistics.

If things are already tense:

- Use email for clarity (and to avoid emotional phone calls)

- Schedule group conversations instead of one-on-one side discussions
- Avoid rehashing unrelated family history

 *Tip:* It helps to treat decisions like a shared business venture. Everyone has a stake, but the focus is on outcomes—not emotions.

Step 3: Acknowledge Emotional Attachments

Sometimes the conflict isn't really about the house—it's about what the house represents:

- A childhood full of memories
- The loss of a parent or matriarch
- Guilt or grief that hasn't been processed

If one heir seems resistant, it may help to:

- Give them time (within reason)
 - Offer them a chance to take photos or keep mementos
 - Talk about ways to honor the loved one's legacy, even if the home is sold
-

Step 4: Bring in a Neutral Third Party

We've acted as a neutral real estate team for many families. Our role is to:

- Keep everyone equally informed
- Provide expert guidance without taking sides
- Offer data-driven advice that helps people see the big picture

 *Important:* When heirs feel ignored or steamrolled, they often dig in. When they feel heard and respected, they're far more likely to cooperate—even if they disagree.

Step 5: Put It in Writing

If you've reached an agreement—great. Now **document it**.

That might include:

- A memo outlining the plan (sell, rent, keep)
- A breakdown of how proceeds or expenses will be split
- A communication plan for decisions and updates
- An agreement on timeline and roles

This avoids misunderstandings and keeps everyone accountable.

When Conflict Can't Be Resolved

In rare cases, a family dispute may require legal intervention. If so, the court may order:

- A **partition sale** (forcing a sale so the value can be divided)
- A third-party mediator
- A court-appointed agent or administrator

Our goal is to avoid this outcome—but we can work alongside your attorney if it becomes necessary.

Summary: Moving Forward as a Family (Even If You Disagree)

- ✓ Lead with facts, not feelings
 - ✓ Keep communication consistent and neutral
 - ✓ Use a professional agent as your guide and buffer
 - ✓ Give each person a voice—but don't let one person stall the entire process
 - ✓ Agree in writing—every time
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In the next chapter, we'll walk through the actual process of **selling an inherited home in Georgia**—what paperwork you'll need, how taxes work, and how to get top dollar with minimal hassle.



Chapter 8: Selling an Inherited Home in Georgia

The Process, the Paperwork, and How to Do It the Right Way the First Time

You've made the decision. You and the other heirs (if there are any) are on the same page. The home is ready, or almost ready. Now it's time to actually **sell** the inherited property.

But if you've never sold a home before—or never done so in the context of probate, family agreements, and tax implications—there's more to it than sticking a sign in the yard.

This chapter walks you through the entire selling process from a Georgia-specific perspective, including:

- Legal documents you'll need
 - How taxes work (and don't)
 - Who needs to sign what—and when
 - And how to make sure the sale goes smoothly for everyone involved
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Step 1: Confirm You Have the Legal Authority to Sell

Before you can legally sell an inherited home in Georgia, **you must have the right to sign on behalf of the estate.** That usually means:

- You are the **executor** named in a valid will, or
- You are the **administrator** appointed by the probate court

If you're one of several heirs and not the executor, you **cannot** list or sell the home until the court grants authority or the executor includes you in a written agreement.

 *Important Document:*

The court will issue **Letters Testamentary** (or **Letters of Administration**) that give legal authority to sign contracts and close on the property. This is required before listing or accepting offers.

Step 2: Prepare the Necessary Paperwork

Your agent (that's us) and your probate attorney will help gather the right documents, which may include:

- A certified copy of the death certificate
- Letters Testamentary or Administration
- The last recorded deed to the home
- A copy of the will (if applicable)
- Signed agreements between heirs (if co-owned)
- Preliminary title search

These documents help avoid closing delays and confirm that you have the legal authority to transfer the property.

Step 3: Understand How Inherited Property is Taxed

One of the most misunderstood aspects of inheritance is taxes. Here's what you should know in Georgia:

💡 Step-Up in Basis

When you inherit property, its value is "stepped up" to its **fair market value at the time of the previous owner's death**. That means:

If the home was worth \$100,000 when your parent bought it, but \$250,000 when they passed, **your new cost basis is \$250,000**.

If you sell it for \$255,000, you only owe capital gains tax on the \$5,000—not the entire \$155,000 in appreciation.

This is a huge benefit to heirs, and often reduces or eliminates capital gains tax entirely.

📄 Do You Have to Pay Estate Tax in Georgia?

No. Georgia does **not** have an estate tax or inheritance tax.

However, federal estate tax *could* apply if the estate is worth over \$13.6 million (as of 2024). Most families don't need to worry about this.

Step 4: List and Market the Home

Once the legal side is in place, the listing process works much like any other sale—but with more attention to transparency and family communication.

What we do as your real estate team:

- Provide a professional CMA and pricing strategy
- Stage or virtually stage the home
- Market across MLS, Zillow, Realtor.com, social media, and our buyer network
- Coordinate showings with all decision-makers in mind
- Keep everyone informed without adding conflict

🎯 *Tip:* Heirs often live in different cities or states. We're used to managing remote communication and digital signatures to keep the process seamless.

Step 5: Accept an Offer and Go Under Contract

When a strong offer comes in:

- We review it with all heirs or authorized decision-makers
- All parties with ownership interest must agree to the sale and sign the contract (or delegate authority to the executor/administrator)
- We move forward with inspections, appraisal, and buyer financing

We provide all documentation and regular updates to everyone involved.

Step 6: Close the Sale

At closing, the proceeds from the sale are typically:

- Used to pay off any estate debts (if still outstanding)
- Divided among heirs as instructed by the will or the court
- Held in escrow if there's a legal hold or family dispute

We work directly with your closing attorney or title company to ensure all legal and tax documents are prepared correctly.

Common Pitfalls (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake	How We Help You Avoid It
Listing before probate is complete	We verify legal authority first
Not informing all heirs	We set up group communication
Pricing based on emotion or guesswork	We provide data-backed valuation
Delays due to missing documents	We coordinate with your attorney early
Surprises at closing	We run a title check before listing

Summary: What to Do Right Now

- ✓ Confirm executor/administrator authority
 - ✓ Gather key legal documents
 - ✓ Understand your tax basis (and potential gains)
 - ✓ Choose an experienced Georgia real estate team
 - ✓ Prepare the home and launch a data-driven listing
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In the final chapter, we'll walk through what happens after the home sells—including how proceeds are distributed, what happens with the estate, and how we help you wrap up the final details with care.



Chapter 9: After the Sale — What Happens Next?

Distributions, Final Duties, and Closing the Estate With Confidence

Selling an inherited home can feel like crossing the finish line. But there are still a few important steps to take after the sale closes—especially if you’re serving as the executor or administrator of the estate.

In this chapter, we’ll explain what happens to the sale proceeds, how to handle remaining responsibilities, and how to wrap up the process with clarity and peace of mind.

Step 1: Proceeds Are Disbursed

At closing, the sale proceeds are:

- First used to pay off any debts or liens on the home (mortgages, taxes, legal fees)
- Then, the remaining balance is distributed to the estate or directly to heirs, depending on the court's instructions

Who gets the money and how it's split depends on:

- The will (if one exists)
- The number of heirs
- Any agreements made during the probate process

💬 *Example:*

Three siblings inherited their parents' home in Cobb County. After expenses, the net sale proceeds were \$315,000. The closing attorney distributed \$105,000 to each heir, per the will's instructions.

If heirs had expenses related to the sale (cleaning, repairs, probate fees), those can also be reimbursed before final disbursement—but *only if agreed upon in advance or authorized by the court*.

Step 2: File Final Estate Paperwork

Once the home is sold and proceeds are distributed, the executor or administrator may need to:

- Provide a final **accounting of the estate**
- Show proof of distribution to heirs
- Close out the estate formally with the Georgia probate court

This ensures everything is handled properly and that your legal duties are fulfilled.

Your probate attorney will usually assist with:

- Filing final court documents
 - Closing the estate bank account
 - Paying final fees or taxes (if any)
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Step 3: Cancel Accounts and Services

Don't forget the "housekeeping" tasks:

- Cancel or transfer any remaining utilities
- Cancel homeowner's insurance (once the home transfers)

- Forward or stop any mail going to the home
- Notify HOA (if applicable) that ownership has changed
- File property tax exemption changes (for the next owner)

If a buyer inherits the home's tax bill or insurance policy by mistake, it could lead to issues or delays down the road.

Step 4: Keep Final Records

Hang on to:

- The closing disclosure (HUD-1 or ALTA statement)
- Any tax documents related to the sale
- A copy of the deed transfer
- Proof of final disbursements

These may be needed for:

- Tax returns
 - Heirs' financial reporting
 - Estate records or audits
-

Step 5: Take a Breath—You've Done Something Big

Selling an inherited home is about more than real estate. It's about honoring the past while clearing a path for the future.

You've dealt with:

- Probate
- Paperwork
- Family dynamics
- Legal responsibilities
- And the emotional weight of loss

That's no small feat.

Let's Stay Connected

Many of our clients go on to buy their next home, invest in new property, or help a friend or relative through a similar process. We'd love to continue to be a resource for you—whether you're ready for the next move or simply want to stay in the know.



Follow us for Georgia market updates, real estate tips, and new listings.



And come say hello at one of our Quarterly Client Appreciation Events.

In the final section, we'll leave you with some words of encouragement—and a reminder that you don't have to go through these life transitions alone.



Closing Thoughts: From Confusion to Clarity

You've Done More Than Handle a Property—You've Handled a Legacy

We wrote this book because we've met so many Georgia families who inherited a home and weren't sure what came next. Maybe that's you.

You didn't ask for this role, but you showed up.

You made decisions—often hard ones.

And you did your best to honor the past while protecting your future.

Whether you chose to keep the home, sell it, or turn it into something new, you've handled a complex situation with grace and responsibility. That matters.

We Hope This Guide Helped You:

- ✓ Understand Georgia's probate and inheritance laws
- ✓ Navigate the emotional and financial sides of family property
- ✓ Prepare the home thoughtfully and efficiently
- ✓ Make informed decisions with other heirs (even if it wasn't easy)
- ✓ Walk through the sale process without surprises or delays

And most importantly:

We hope it helped you feel like **you weren't alone**.

Our Ongoing Commitment to You

At The Corbin Real Estate Team, we don't just work in Georgia—we live here. We've walked this path with our own families. We've helped hundreds of clients through sensitive real estate transitions. And we'll continue to be here when you need us.

We can support you now—and in the future—with:

- Selling or buying your next home
 - Helping another family member manage an estate
 - Exploring Georgia real estate opportunities when you're ready
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Let's Stay in Touch

We'd love to stay connected:

- **Follow us on social media** for market updates, home tips, and local events
 - **Join us at a Quarterly Client Appreciation Event**—we'd love to see you in person
 - **Reach out anytime** if we can help with your next chapter
-

You've handled something big.

You've done it with heart and integrity.

And if you ever need a hand again—you know who to call.

With appreciation and respect,

Ron & Addison Corbin

The Corbin Real Estate Team