

# GWINNETT GAZETEER

**Suwanee**  
**Gwinnett County, Georgia**

## **Suwanee**

The town of Suwanee dates back to 1871 when what is now the Southern Railroad was constructed through that section of Gwinnett County.

Suwanee Old Town was an Indian Village on the Chattahoochee River at, or a short distance from, the mouth of Suwanee Creek. This creek got its name from the Indian village and the village got its name from an Indian tribe known as Shawnees that settled there in the latter part of the 18th century. It is believed, however, that the village or settlement was inhabited long before that particular group of Indians settled there and gave it their name. It is very probable that this town or village was several hundred years old.

*Note that some folks believe that the community was named for a Shawnee Indian tribe that settled here in the latter part of the 18th century, though the village probably was inhabited long before this particular group of Native Americans arrived. The City's name is thought to derive from the English mispronunciation of Shawnee, a tribe of Algonquin Indians, who first settled along the banks of the Chattahoochee River. Shawnee is an Algonquin word for "Southerner" and was used because the Shawnee lived the furthest south of all the Algonquin tribes.*

With the completion of the railroad in 1871 and the construction of a depot, the village of Suwanee was created and later incorporated.

Business houses were erected, dwellings constructed, families moved in, a school organized, and a Baptist Church and a Methodist Church established.

### **The Settlers**

The surrounding section of the county was settled by the Browns, Brogdons, Stricklands, Armstrongs, Douglasses, Verners, Baxters, and others.

### **The Post Office**

James Brown was instrumental in having a post office established there in 1839 and he was postmaster for 16 years. He was also tax collector and receiver for several years.

## **The Railroad**

The Southern Railroad route between Atlanta and Charlotte was constructed through Suwanee in 1871.

In 1881 a narrow-gauge railroad was constructed from Lawrenceville to Suwanee, connecting there with the Southern Railroad. making Suwanee a changing station for people to transfer to the Southern Railroad line that could take them into Atlanta. The town had approximately 215 residents at the time.

## **Merchants and Business**

Henry W. Rhodes, for many years local agent for the railroad at Suwanee, operated a hotel that was known far and wide for serving fine meals at a reasonable price.

John B. Brogdon was one of the town's successful merchants. His department store attracted customers from far and near.

Other widely known business men were J. W. Beaty, Emory S. Brogdon, Clayton Turner, William Wilson, M. T. Verner, Mack Wheeler, and G. W. Little.

A splendid high school is housed in a building that was erected in 1942.

## **Moving Forward**

Suwanee was incorporated in 1949 and was until the latter part of 1900, a community that farmed and was dependent moreover on the agricultural aspects than big business. The advent of new roads made traversing to and from Suwanee with such an ease after that point, that the community began to prosper and grow. Statistics from Suwanee government state that they grew from 615 persons to 1,026 in just ten years and that has increased now to show 8,725, Est. population in July 2002: 10,441 (+19.8% change) Males: 4,410 (50.5%), Females: 4,315 (49.5%).

Currently Suwanee's historic commercial district is located at the south end of Main Street. Turn onto Main Street from Lawrenceville-Suwanee; from Buford Highway and then Russell Road; and via McGinnis Ferry Road and then Scales Road.

Look how easy it is to access things from Suwanee today.

- GWINNETT TECHNICAL COLLEGE (about 6 miles; LAWRENCEVILLE, GA;
- GAINESVILLE COLLEGE (about 18 miles; OAKWOOD, GA;
- DEVRY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (about 25 miles; DECATUR, GA;
- EMORY UNIVERSITY (about 25 miles; ATLANTA, GA;
- GEORGIA PERIMETER COLLEGE (about 28 miles; DECATUR, GA;
- GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY-MAIN CAMPUS (about 30 miles; ATLANTA, GA;
- GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY (about 31 miles; ATLANTA, GA;

Public high schools in Suwanee:

- **COLLINS HILL HIGH SCHOOL**  
( Location: 50 TAYLOR ROAD
- **NORTH GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL**  
Location: 20 LEVEL CREEK ROAD

Public primary/middle schools in Suwanee:

- **RIVERSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Location: 5445 SETTLES BRIDGE ROAD
- **SUWANEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Location: 3875 SMITHTOWN ROAD
- **WALNUT GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Location: 75 TAYLOR ROAD
- **SETTLES BRIDGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Location: 600 JAMES BURGESS ROAD

Private primary/middle schools in Suwanee:

- **HORIZON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**  
Location: 2172 LAWRENCEVILLE SUWANEE RD
- **REDEEMER CHRISTIAN ACADEMY**  
Location: 641 EVA KENNEDY RD

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Transcription from: J. C. Flanigan's History of Gwinnett County. Volume II.  
Information from Suwanee Government and Mr. Bledsoe.

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