



County Names and Origins

Appling County

Appling County was created by legislative act in 1818 from treaty lands negotiated from the Creek Indians and is named for Col. Daniel Appling. Appling was regarded as Georgia's most outstanding soldier of the War of 1812. Baxley, the county seat, is named for Wilson Baxley, who had come from North Carolina as a pioneer in this southeastern Georgia area near the Altamaha River.

Atkinson County

Atkinson County, one of Georgia's youngest, was organized during World War I from lands previously part of Clinch and Coffee counties. It is named for William Y. Atkinson, governor from 1894 to 1898. Pearson, the county seat, is named for an early settler.

Bacon County

Bacon County is named for Augustus O. Bacon, a four-term U.S. senator and a specialist on Mexican affairs. It was created in 1914 from parts of Appling, Pierce and Ware counties. Alma, the county seat, is named for no one. Its name was derived from the first letters of the four cities that had served as Georgia state capitals: Augusta, Louisville, Milledgeville and Atlanta.

Baker County

Baker County was created in 1825 from territory that was once part of Early County. Baker was later to be divided to allot land to Dougherty, Mitchell and Miller counties. Its namesake is Col. John Baker, a noted patriot of the Revolutionary period who had served in the 1775 Provincial Congress in Savannah. The county seat, Newton, is named to honor Sgt. John Newton, who led a raid on Savannah to rescue Patriot prisoners of war in 1779.

Baldwin County

Baldwin County was created in 1803 from Creek Indian lands. It is named for Abraham Baldwin, a member of the Continental Congress and author of legislation that established the nation's first state university, the University of Georgia. Milledgeville, the county seat, was the state capital for 61 years. It is named for John Milledge, a Revolutionary leader, member of Congress, Georgia governor and donor of most of the land on which the university was built.

Banks County

Banks County was created by legislative act in 1858. Its territory had been on the border of the Cherokee Indian Nation since the Treaty of Augusta in 1783. It is named for a circuit-riding physician, Richard Banks, of Gainesville, who treated not only settlers of the area but their Cherokee neighbors when smallpox struck. Banks County land had been part of Habersham and Franklin counties.

Barrow County

Barrow County was created in 1914 to settle a dispute among three counties: Gwinnett, Walton and Jackson. The city of Winder, the county seat, was located at the juncture of the three counties, and residents were plagued with disputed taxes and business affairs related to uncertain boundaries. The state legislature solved the problems by creating a county around Winder, formerly known as "Jug Tavern," and naming it for David Crenshaw Barrow, a chancellor and popular instructor at the University of Georgia.

Bartow County

Bartow County was created in 1832 as "Cass County" to honor Gen. Lewis Cass of Michigan. When the general's views on abolition proved an embarrassment to the Confederate populace in 1861, it took steps to rename it to honor Gen. Francis S. Bartow, who led victorious Southern forces at the first battle of Manassas. The first county seat, Cassville, was destroyed by yet another general, William T. Sherman, then a point a few miles south on the railroad, Cartersville, was designated as the new county seat.

Ben Hill County

Ben Hill County took its territory from parts of Irwin and Wilcox counties in 1906 and was given the name of a staunch Reconstruction leader, Benjamin Harvey Hill. Hill had served in both the U.S. Congress and the Confederate Congress. Fitzgerald, the county seat, was founded by 5,000 members of the non-profit American Tribune Soldiers' Colony Company who came from 38 other states. Philander Fitzgerald, for whom the town was named, was the publisher of the American Tribune.

Berrien County

Berrien County was organized in 1856 from parts of Coffee, Irwin and Lowndes counties. The last skirmish with Creek Indians had been fought 20 years earlier in its territory. Its name was chosen to honor John MacPherson Berrien, a U.S. senator from Georgia and President Andrew Jackson's attorney general. Nashville is named for Gen. Francis Nash, a distinguished soldier of the Revolutionary War.

Bibb County

Bibb County was created in 1822 to accommodate the town of Macon, which had sprung up across the Ocmulgee River from the frontier post known as Fort Hawkins. Houston, Jones, Monroe and Twiggs counties gave up territory to create Bibb, which takes its name from a distinguished Georgian, Dr. William Wyatt Bibb. He was Alabama's first elected governor. Macon bears the name of a North Carolinian, Nathaniel Macon.

Bleckley County

Bleckley County is named for Chief Justice Logan E. Bleckley of the Georgia Supreme Court. It was made a county in 1912, taking its territory from Pulaski County. The name of the county seat, Cochran, is a tribute to the president of the Macon & Brunswick Railroad, Arthur E. Cochran, who is credited with leading development in the area.

Brantley County

Brantley County dates to 1920, when parts of Charlton, Pierce and Wayne counties were sliced away for a new county that is named for a prominent landowner, Benjamin D. Brantley. Nahunta, the county seat, is not an Indian name, as one might guess. It was a timber stop on the railroad labeled N. A. Hunter Siding. The railroad men dubbed it Nahunta.

Brooks County

Brooks County got its territory in 1858 from Lowndes and Thomas counties, but even earlier, those lands had been part of Irwin County. It is named for Preston Brooks, a defender of states' rights and a member of Congress prior to the Civil War. Another states' rights advocate, Gen. John Quitman of Mexican War fame, was honored in the naming of the county seat.

Bryan County

Bryan County was created in 1793 from parts of Chatham, Effingham and Liberty counties. It is named for Jonathan Bryan, a member of the King's Council who accompanied Oglethorpe at the colony's founding and one of the first British subjects to protest the oppressive rule of England. He was imprisoned for his offenses to the crown.

Bulloch County

Bulloch County was created in 1796 from treaty lands acquired from the Creek Indians. It included territory later to become part of Emanuel, Jenkins and Toombs counties. This county is named for Georgia's first provisional governor, Archibald Bulloch, an ancestor of Theodore Roosevelt.

Burke County

Burke County is one of the original counties dating to 1777, when the first state constitution designated it from the colonial parish of St. George. It was later divided to form Screven and Jefferson counties. Its name honors Edmond Burke, a member of Parliament who supported the colonies' interests. Waynesboro, the county seat, is named for Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne of Revolutionary War fame.



County Names and Origins

Butts County

Butts County was carved from Henry and Monroe counties in 1825 and named for Capt. Samuel Butts, a militiaman killed fighting Creek Indians in the War of 1812. The county seat, Jackson, commemorates another Indian fighter, Andrew Jackson. This territory was the home of Chief William McIntosh, who negotiated treaties ceding Creek Indian lands to Georgia and was subsequently executed by his tribesmen, who felt the sale was a betrayal of their territorial rights.

Calhoun County

Calhoun County is made up of land once part of Baker and Early counties. It was designated in 1854 and is named for Sen. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. He had resigned as vice president of the United States to return to the Senate and debate Daniel Webster on states' rights. Morgan, the county seat, is named for Revolutionary War hero Gen. Daniel Morgan.

Camden County

Camden County was the second county to be created. Its land was a combination of the colonial parishes of St. Mary and St. Thomas. The name is a tribute to Charles Pratt, the earl of Camden and a champion of home rule for the colonies. Remnants of a Spanish mission, thought to have been erected 200 years before Oglethorpe's arrival, were found on the St. Mary's River in Camden County. Jeffersonton was the first county seat, followed by the town of St. Marys and finally Woodbine.

Candler County

Candler County was created in 1914 from parts of Bulloch, Emanuel and Tattnall counties and is named for Governor Alien D. Candler. He is credited with preserving and researching many of the state's colonial, Revolutionary and Confederate records. Metter is the county seat.

Carroll County

Carroll County was created from Creek Indian lands in 1825 and became the site of the state's first gold rush a year later. It is named for Charles Carroll of Maryland, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence. Carrollton, the county seat, was also the name of his plantation in Maryland. The town was actually moved eight miles from its original location. Some of the county's original territory was taken to form Douglas, Haralson, Heard and Troup counties.

Catoosa County

Catoosa County was originally part of Walker and Whitfield counties. Designated in 1853, its name reflects a prominent landmark, Catoosa Springs. Ringgold, the county seat, is named for Maj. Samuel Ringgold, who died in the first engagement of the Mexican War. A large preserve at the site of the Battle of Chickamauga during the Civil War is in Catoosa County. Some 56,000 Union troops and 67,000 Confederates waged one of the bloodiest campaigns there, with more than 34,000 casualties about equally distributed on both sides. Although the Confederate forces finally prevailed, it was called "a victory from which the Confederacy never recovered."

Charlton County

Charlton County was designated in 1854 from parts of Appling and Wayne counties and named for Sen. Robert M. Charlton, of Savannah. Folkston, the county seat, was named for the Folks family, prominent citizens of the area. A large part of the county lies in the Okefenokee Swamp. As late as 1832, settlers were contending with elements of Creek and Seminole Indian tribes who raided this frontier.

Chatham County

Chatham County encompasses the site of Oglethorpe's first landing in what was to become the colony of Georgia. After the break with England, Chatham was the third county to be designated, comprising lands from Christ Church and St. Phillip parishes in 1777. It is named for one of England's most illustrious prime ministers, William Pitt, the earl of Chatham. Savannah, the county seat, is derived from a Spanish word meaning "grassy plain."

Chattahoochee County

Chattahoochee County was given its territory from parts of Marion and Muscogee counties in 1854. The river, which Indians called Chattahoochee (meaning "red rock"), is the origin of its name, while Cusseta, the county seat, is named for one of the principal Lower Creek Indian tribes. Fort Benning Military Reservation takes up nearly three-quarters of Chattahoochee County's territory. Near the fort's present-day headquarters is the site of the "Peace Town of the Lower Creeks," which Hernando DeSoto mentioned in his journal in 1540.

Chattooga County

Chattooga County was created in 1838 from parts of Walker and Floyd counties and is named for its principal river. Summerville is the county seat, but the origin of its name is uncertain. Within Chattooga County territory was the home of the famous Cherokee Sequoyah who invented his nation's alphabet, thus advancing his people through the use of a written language.

Cherokee County

Cherokee County was created by legislative act in 1830 from lands previously held by the Cherokee Nation. It was later divided into 24 counties. The forcible removal of the Cherokees opened the area to settlers looking for cheap land and some seeking the source of gold some of the Indians used in trade. Canton, the county seat, is named for the city in China. Founders of the town tried to initiate silk production there, but nothing more than the name survived that venture.



Ben Hill County Courthouse

County Names and Origins



Clarke County

Clarke County, now consolidated with the city of Athens, took its territory from Jackson County. Still the smallest of all 159 Georgia counties, Clarke was named for Gen. Elijah Clarke of Revolutionary War fame. Athens grew up around the University of Georgia, the oldest state university, chartered in 1785.

Clay County

Clay County was created from parts of Early and Randolph counties in 1854 and named for U.S. Sen. Henry Clay of Kentucky, a defender of state sovereignty. In 1816, Gen. Edmund Pendleton Gaines (who had arrested Aaron Burr for treason) built the fort that bears his name, and the county seat of Fort Gaines developed around it.

Clayton County

Clayton County was designated in 1858 from land previously part of Fayette and Henry counties. It is named for Judge Augustin S. Clayton, a congressman from Georgia who won popularity for his opposition to tariffs. The county seat had been called Leaksville until the arrival of the rail line. It was renamed Jonesboro for one of the railroad surveyors who won favor with the local leaders.

Clinch County

Clinch County land had been part of Lowndes and Ware counties until 1850. It was named for Gen. Duncan Clinch, who is credited with the defeat of Seminole Chief Osceola and who later served as a congressman from Georgia. The original county seat, Magnolia, has vanished from record. Homerville, the present seat of government, takes its name from Dr. John Homer Mattox, who had helped lay out the town.

Cobb County

Cobb County was one of the 24 created from Cherokee Indian territory in 1832. It is named for Judge Thomas W. Cobb, a former U.S. senator. Marietta, the county seat, is named for his wife. In frontier days, the Chattahoochee River, which forms Cobb's southeastern boundary, was the dividing line between Creek and Cherokee Indian territories.

Coffee County

Coffee County had to draw its territory from parts of Clinch, Irwin, Telfair and Ware counties in 1854. Gen. John Coffee, an Indian fighter, is honored with its naming. Douglas, the county seat, is named for Stephen A. Douglas, the Democrat who unsuccessfully opposed Abraham Lincoln in his first race for the presidency.

Colquitt County

Colquitt County was created from Lowndes and Thomas counties in 1856 and later gave up part of its land to Irwin County. It is the namesake of the Rev. Walter T. Colquitt, who served as a U.S. senator and a local judge as well as a Methodist minister. Moultrie, the county seat, is named for Gen. William Moultrie, a Revolutionary War figure.

Columbia County

Columbia County was settled by Quakers who chose to name their county for an explorer, Christopher Columbus, rather than for a military man, as was often the custom. John Appling, the original pioneer of the area, gave his name to the county seat.

Columbus-Muscogee County

Columbus-Muscogee, the first consolidated city-county in Georgia, was acquired from Creek Indian territory in 1826. Muscogee is the name of a branch of the Creek Nation. Columbus, of course, is named for Christopher Columbus. Early in the Civil War, the Haiman Sword Factory employed 400 people making swords, sabers and Colt Navy pistols for the Confederacy. The last land battle of the war was fought at Columbus as Union forces attacked entrenched Confederate riflemen and artillery from the west.

Cook County

Cook County was created from Berrien County lands in 1918. Its name honors Gen. Philip Cook, who fought in both the Seminole War and the Civil War, then served in Congress. He was the Georgia secretary of state for 24 years and a member of the commission that oversaw construction of the state Capitol building. Adel is the county seat and the location of a "bottomless" lake formed by a lime sink.

Coweta County

Coweta County is named for a Lower Creek Indian tribe, the Cowetas. A treaty in 1825 ceded land for this county and, subsequently, for Heard and Campbell counties. Campbell was absorbed by Fulton County during the Great Depression. Newnan, the county seat, bears the name of another Indian fighter, Gen. Daniel Newnan.

Crawford County

Crawford County was created in 1822 from part of Houston County and was later enlarged by additions from Macon and Talbot counties. Its name honors William H. Crawford, the Georgian who was serving as U.S. secretary of the treasury that year. Crawford had been a jurist and a diplomat. Knoxville commemorates Gen. Henry Knox of the Revolutionary War.



Athens-Clarke County Courthouse



County Names and Origins

Crisp County

Crisp County was designated in 1905 from territory formerly part of Dooly County. It is named for Charles Frederick Crisp, a jurist and speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1891 until 1893. Cordele, the county seat, is another "child of the railroad" that grew with the economy at a rail junction. It is named for the daughter of the railroad's president.

Dade County

Dade County, the northwestern corner piece of Georgia, dates to 1837, when its lands were taken from Walker County. First called Salem, the county seat later was designated Trenton after New Jersey's capital. Isolated by mountain ridges, until the 1940s there was no paved road from Dade into the rest of Georgia. Travelers usually approached it from Tennessee.

Dawson County

Dawson County was created by taking land from Gilmer, Lumpkin and Forsyth counties in 1857. Originally it was part of the Cherokee Nation and was "given" to Georgia through a dubious treaty. Dawson County and its county seat of Dawsonville bear the name of Judge William C. Dawson. He compiled the laws of Georgia and commanded a brigade in the Creek Wars of 1836. He served in both houses of the state legislature, then in the U.S. Congress prior to the Civil War.

Decatur County

Decatur County was created in 1823 from portions of Early County. It is named for Commodore Stephen Decatur, who defeated Barbary Coast pirates at Tripoli in 1815. Bainbridge, the county seat, is named for Commodore William Bainbridge, commander of the U.S. Constitution, "Old Ironsides." This region was crossed by Hernando DeSoto in 1540 during his trek through Georgia. He found the Flint River, a barrier that was eventually crossed by a hastily built ferry.

DeKalb County

DeKalb County was designated in 1822 from parts of Henry, Gwinnett and Fayette counties. At one time it contained all of the city of Atlanta and much of what was to become Fulton County. In naming the county, its founders honored Baron Johann DeKalb, who accompanied LaFayette and served in the Continental Army. He was captured and died in a British prison. Decatur, the county seat, is named for naval hero Stephen Decatur.

Dodge County

Dodge County was given territory from Montgomery, Pulaski and Telfair counties in 1870. It is named for William E. Dodge, a New York lumberman who owned vast timber acreage in Georgia and who persuaded Congress to remove taxation from timber. He built the county's first courthouse as a gift. Eastman, the county seat, is named for one of his associates, W. P. Eastman.

Dooly County

Dooly County was one of the original land lot counties but was divided to create Crisp and parts of Macon, Pulaski, Wilcox, Turner and Worth counties. It was designated in 1821 and named for Col. John Dooly, a neighbor of famed patriot Nancy Hart. Dooly had prosecuted – and likely persecuted – Tories during the Revolutionary War. He was murdered by Tories in his home in 1780. Founders gave the county seat the name of the Austrian city Vienna.

Dougherty County

Dougherty County was created in 1853 by dividing Baker County. It is named for Judge Charles Dougherty, of Athens, a popular advocate of states' rights. The county seat, Albany, is thought to have been named for the New York state capital.

Douglas County

Douglas County was pieced together from Carroll and old Campbell counties plus a small section of what was originally Cherokee County. Its creation dates to 1870. Both the county and its seat of government, Douglasville, are named for Stephen A. Douglas, Abraham Lincoln's rival. Douglas had chosen a Georgian as his running mate.

Early County

Early County was designated in 1818 directly from Creek Indian land. Subsequent divisions of territory allowed for the creation of Clay, Calhoun, Dougherty, Mitchell, Gray, Decatur, Miller and Seminole counties. It was named for Peter Early, a governor of Georgia, member of Congress and judge of the Ocmulgee Circuit. Blakely, the county seat, is named for Capt. Johnston Blakely, commander of the sloop Wasp during the War of 1812.

Echols County

Echols County on the Florida border was created from Clinch and Lowndes counties in 1858. It is named for Robert M. Echols, a member of the General Assembly for 24 years. Echols enlisted in the war with Mexico and held the rank of brigadier general until he died in service. Statenville, the county seat, is unique in that it has no residents; its city limits are restricted to the courthouse block by a state statute.



Jefferson County Courthouse

County Names and Origins



Colquitt County Courthouse

Effingham County

Effingham County is the fourth-oldest county, having been created from the colonial parishes of St. Matthew and St. Phillip in 1777. Its name honors Lord Effingham, an English champion of colonial rights. Much of the county was settled by Salzburgers from Germany who joined Oglethorpe in 1733. Springfield is the county seat but is not the first city to hold that status.

Elbert County

Elbert County was sliced from Wilkes County in 1790. It and the county seat of Elberton are named for Gen. Samuel Elbert, who commanded Continental forces in Georgia during the Revolution and later served as governor. Nancy Morgan Hart of Revolutionary War fame lived in Elbert County when she turned the tables on Tory soldiers who invaded her home.

Emanuel County

Emanuel County probably has the most disputed boundaries of all the Georgia counties. Designated in 1812, Emanuel was once part of Washington and Effingham counties. Boundary disputes and shifts occurred among Emanuel, Bulloch, Montgomery, Jenkins, Johnson and Toombs counties during much of the 19th century. At one point feuding neighbors persuaded legislators to move the boundary so they would not have to live in the same county with each other. The county is named for a former governor, David Emanuel, who served in the Revolutionary War. Swainsboro, the county seat, is named for a local pioneer family. It was incorporated in 1814.

Evans County

Evans County was created in 1914 from lands of Tattnall and Bulloch counties. It also encompasses what was once a corner of Washington County derived from a tract ceded by the Creek Indians. It is named for Confederate Gen. Clement A. Evans, who led the last charge of the Army of Virginia at Appomattox. Claxton, the county seat, was once called Hendrix.

Fannin County

Fannin County bordering Tennessee was created in 1854 from parts of Gilmer and Union counties. It was part of the original vast Cherokee County. The name honors Col. James W. Fannin of Georgia, who led about 350 volunteers to the Texas War for Independence, was captured and executed at the Battle of Goliad in 1836. Blue Ridge, the county seat, bears the name of its surrounding mountains, which had provided shelter for the last remnants of the Cherokee Nation before their forced removal to Oklahoma along the infamous "Trail of Tears." Some Cherokees evaded capture and remained deep in the forested mountains for generations.

Fayette County

Fayette County came into being after the Creek Indian cession of land at Indian Springs. Designated in 1821, it and the county seat, Fayetteville, are named for the Marquis de LaFayette, who became one of Gen. George Washington's ablest lieutenants in the Revolutionary War.

Floyd County

Floyd County was carved out of Cherokee County in 1832 and named for Gen. John Floyd, an Indian fighter. Territory for Chattooga and Gordon counties was later taken from Floyd. The county seat, Rome, is built on the ancient site of Chiaha, which Hernando DeSoto had noted in his travels. It is at the confluence of the Etowah and Oostanaula rivers, which form the Coosa River.

Forsyth County

Forsyth County was another division of the original Cherokee County, this one created by legislative act in 1832. It is named for John Forsyth, an attorney general of Georgia, a member of both houses of Congress and U.S. secretary of state under presidents Jackson and Van Buren. As minister to Spain, it was Forsyth who negotiated the purchase of Florida. Cumming, the county seat, is named for William Cumming, of Augusta, a colonel in the War of 1812. He became an advocate of states' rights versus a strong central government.

Franklin County

Franklin County dates to 1784, when its territory covered the future counties of Banks, Jackson, Barrow, Clarke, Oconee and Stephens counties plus parts of Hart, Madison, Hall and Gwinnett. Veterans of the War of 1812 were given land grants as bounty warrants, but Franklin County was so remote that few exercised their rights of ownership. It is named, of course, for Benjamin Franklin, author, statesman, diplomat, philosopher and signer of the Declaration of Independence. Carnesville, the county seat, is named for Thomas B. Carnes, a member of the third Congress of the United States.

Fulton County

Fulton County was created from DeKalb County in 1853, then obtained its strange, elongated shape by absorbing the destitute counties of Milton to the north and Campbell to the south during the Great Depression. It is named for Robert Fulton, inventor of the steam-driven boat. Atlanta, the county seat and state capital, grew from being the terminal point on an early railroad; it was first named Terminus. Later the name was changed to Marthasville as a compliment to Governor Wilson Lumpkin's daughter.

Gilmer County

Gilmer County was part of the original Cherokee County, then was divided to form Fannin, Dawson and Pickens counties. It is named for George Rockingham Gilmer, a state legislator, member of Congress and twice governor of Georgia. The county seat, Ellijay, grew on the site of a Cherokee village of the same name meaning "green earth."

Glascocock County

Glascocock County was created in 1857 from part of Warren County. It is named for Gen. Thomas Glascocock, who earned his rank in the War of 1812 and in the Seminole War. He was speaker of the Georgia House and a member of Congress. Judge William Gibson donated \$500 toward construction of the first courthouse and got a county seat named after him.



County Names and Origins

Glynn County

Glynn County is one of the original eight counties created by the constitution in 1777. In colonial days, it was the territory of St. David and St. Patrick parishes. The name recognizes John Glynn, a member of the British House of Commons and a defender of colonial interests. Brunswick, the county seat, is named for the home of England's Hanoverian rulers.

Gordon County

Gordon County, created in 1850, took its land from Floyd and Bartow counties. William Washington Gordon, president of the Central Railroad and Banking Company, was the man for whom the county was named. The first Georgian to graduate from West Point, he entered law practice and actively promoted the state's development. Calhoun, the county seat, is named for Sen. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina.

Grady County

Grady County was created in 1905 from parts of Decatur and Thomas counties. Founders named it to honor Henry W. Grady, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution* during the Reconstruction Period and an advocate of the "new South." He sought to heal the bitter division between North and South. Cairo, the county seat, was named for the city in Egypt, although the reason is unclear.

Greene County

Greene County dates to 1786, when it became the 11th county designated. Both the county and its seat of government, Greensboro (despite the different spellings), honor Nathaniel Greene, who ranked next to Gen. George Washington during the Revolutionary War. A native of Rhode Island, Greene was given a tract of Georgia land at the close of the war. It was several years later that he took up residence in the more southerly state, where he lived for only one year before dying of sunstroke.

Gwinnett County

Gwinnett County was created in 1818 from treaty lands ceded by the Creek and Cherokee Indians. It is named for Button Gwinnett, one of Georgia's three signers of the Declaration of Independence. He had helped draft the state constitution and was appointed to fill the unexpired term of governor. Failing later to win election, his politics led to a duel with Gen. Lachlan McIntosh that proved fatal to Gwinnett. The county seat, Lawrenceville, is named for Capt. James Lawrence, the mortally wounded commander of the Chesapeake during the War of 1812. It was he who while dying gave his crew the battle cry, "Don't give up the ship!"

Habersham County

Habersham County was created in 1818 from Cherokee Indian lands. White County was later given part of Habersham's territory. It is named for President George Washington's postmaster general and the mayor of Savannah, Maj. Joseph Habersham. Clarksville, the county seat, is named for Georgia Governor John Clarke.

Hall County

Hall County had its beginning in 1818, its territory taken from Indian treaty lands. It is named for Dr. Lyman Hall, signer of the Declaration of Independence and later governor of Georgia. The county seat, Gainesville, may have been named for a family that settled there early in the 19th century, or it may refer to Gen. Edmund P. Gaines, who arrested Aaron Burr for treason. Gainesville was the first Southern city to have electric streetlights.

Hancock County

Hancock County got its territory from Greene and Washington counties in 1793. Its name honors John Hancock, whose signature heads the list of signers of the Declaration of Independence. Hancock had presided over the Continental Congress. Sparta, the county seat, was named for the ancient Greek city, probably because its early residents realized they would need Spartan characteristics to survive so near hostile Indian territory and so far from supportive neighbors. This county remained a troubled frontier for 40 years before more westerly lands were ceded to the state of Georgia and settled.

Haralson County

Haralson County on the Alabama border was drawn from Carroll and Polk counties in 1856. Again its founders sought a name commemorating a military man, Gen. Hugh A. Haralson of the Georgia Militia, a member of Congress and chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs during the Mexican War. The act authorizing the county entrusted judges of the inferior court with locating a site for public buildings. They chose the site of the present county seat and named it Buchanan for the last Democrat president before the Civil War, James Buchanan.

Harris County

Harris County was created in 1827 from lands formerly part of Muscogee and Troup counties. Savannah Mayor Charles Harris is honored with its naming, and the county seat is named for George W. Hamilton of South Carolina, who championed high tariffs to protect certain American industries, likely ones important to the Harris County area. Harris was the first Georgia county to adopt a commission form of government.

Hart County

Hart County is the only one in Georgia named for a woman, Nancy Hart of Revolutionary War fame. She captured a small band of Tories who had been terrorizing her community. Hart dates to 1853, when it was designated from parts of Elbert, Franklin and Madison counties. A point near Hartwell, the county seat, was known as Ah'yehli Alohee to the Cherokees, meaning "center of the world."

Heard County

Heard County's territory was taken from Carroll, Coweta and Troup counties in 1830 and named for Stephen Heard of what is now Richmond County. He had been a relentless fighter against Tories during the Revolutionary War and at one time was acting governor of Georgia. When Tories captured the new state Capitol at Augusta, Heard moved the government and its documents to Heard's Fort. He was captured at the Battle of Kettle Creek, tried and condemned for sedition, but escaped jail with assistance from a family servant. The county seat, Franklin, is named for Benjamin Franklin.

Henry County

Henry County was created from Creek Indian lands in 1821 and named for Patrick Henry, the Virginia patriot. McDonough, the county seat, is named for naval Capt. James McDonough, who was victorious over the British on Lake Champlain during the War of 1812. Land originally set aside as Henry County after the Treaty of Indian Springs contains what are now Butts, Clayton, DeKalb, Fulton, Newton and Spalding counties.

Houston County

Houston County was also created from Creek Indian land in 1821. It was named not for Sam Houston of Texas, as many assume, but for Governor John Houston of the Revolutionary period. (The name is correctly pronounced "House-ton.") He called the first gathering of the Sons of Liberty in 1774, was a member of the Continental Congress and governor from 1778 to 1784. Perry, the county seat, honors Capt. Oliver H. Perry, who defeated the British in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

Irwin County

Irwin County began as a large territory ceded by the Creek Indians in 1818 but was divided into 10 counties: Worth, Tift, Ben Hill, Colquitt, Cook, Berrien, Lowndes, Brooks and Thomas counties plus parts of Turner, Wilcox, Lanier, Echols, Coffee and Atkinson counties. It bears the name of Governor Jared Irwin, who helped expose the infamous Yazoo Fraud, a land scheme. Ocilla is the county seat, although that distinction previously belonged to Irwinville, where Confederate President Jefferson Davis was captured by Union troops.



County Names and Origins

Jackson County

Jackson County was created in 1796 from the headright county of Franklin. It was named for Gen. James Jackson, who served in the Revolutionary War, was a member of Congress and then the U.S. Senate. Jefferson, the county seat, honors Thomas Jefferson. It was in Jackson County that Dr. Crawford W. Long performed surgery using an anesthetic, ether, for the first time on March 30, 1842.

Jasper County

Jasper County was drawn from Baldwin County in 1807 and originally called Randolph County to honor John Randolph of Virginia. Members of the Georgia General Assembly, however, became irritated with his stand on national issues in 1812 and voted to name the county for a Revolutionary War hero Sgt. William Jasper, who died trying to retrieve a flag during the siege of Savannah. By 1828, Randolph was back in Georgia's good graces, and another new county was named for him. Monticello, the county seat, pays tribute to Thomas Jefferson, using the name of his home.

Jeff Davis County

Jeff Davis County came into being from parts of Appling and Coffee counties in 1905. It was named for the president of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis. Hazlehurst, the county seat, is named for the civil engineer who surveyed the route for the Macon and Brunswick Railroad.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County was created from parts of Burke and Warren counties in 1796 and named for President Thomas Jefferson. Honoring a Revolutionary War ally, founders named the county seat Louisville for King Louis XVI of France. An early settler, George Galphin, maintained a trading post from the 1750s and cultivated great influence among the Creek Indians of this region. It was at his trading post that the Creeks made a treaty and ceded all the land between the Altamaha and St. Mary's rivers to Georgia. Louisville was the state capital from 1796 until 1806, succeeding Savannah and Augusta.

Jenkins County

Jenkins County was organized in 1905, its land taken from Screven, Bulloch, Burke and Emanuel counties. It is named for Governor Charles J. Jenkins, while Millen, the county seat, is named for a distinguished attorney, John Millen, of Savannah. Jones House, a stagecoach stop in Jenkins County, was more than 100 years old when Union Gen. William T. Sherman's troops looted and set it afire. The same troops, however, scurried to put the fire out when Mrs. Jones refused to leave her sickbed.

Johnson County

Johnson County was created in 1858 from parts of Washington, Emanuel and Laurens counties. Its name honors Hershel V. Johnson, a Georgia governor and Stephen Douglas's running mate in an unsuccessful bid against Abraham Lincoln in 1860. Wrightsville, the county seat, is thought to be named for John B. Wright, a pioneer resident. This county's irregular southern boundary was an accommodation for a citizen so irate with his county commissioner that he prevailed on his legislators to separate his land from Johnson County. The Jefferson/Johnson county line follows the route of the Old Sunbury Road, one of the longest thoroughfares of its time. It was laid out in the 1790s.

Jones County

Jones County was carved from Baldwin County in 1807 and is named for James Jones, a Savannah attorney who served in the state legislature at the age of 23 and was a member of the state constitutional convention of 1798. Gray, the county seat, is named for a family prominent among the early settlers.

Lamar County

Lamar County, nearest the geographical center of Georgia, came into being in 1920 with the partition of lands formerly in Pike and Monroe counties. The new county was named for Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, a Confederate colonel, member of Congress and U.S. senator before being appointed secretary of the interior by President Grover Cleveland. He was eventually made a Supreme Court justice. The county seat, Barnesville, derives its name from Gideon Barnes, who established a tavern and stagecoach stop there in 1820.

Lanier County

Lanier County took its territory from parts of Berrien, Clinch and Lowndes counties in 1920. It is named for poet Sidney Lanier. Lakeland, the county seat's name, refers to the many lakes in that area, which, with the Alapaha River, have long made this county famous for good fishing.

Laurens County

Laurens County obtained most of its territory from Wilkinson County in 1807, but the part east of Dublin, the county seat, had been in Washington County until 1811. The name commemorates Col. John Laurens of South Carolina, aide-de-camp to Gen. George Washington and the son of the president of the Continental Congress. After distinguished service at the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, Savannah and Charleston, Laurens was killed in 1782. Dublin takes its name from the city in Ireland. Many of the early settlers had come from Ireland.

Lee County

Lee County was an original land lot county comprising lands obtained from the Creek Indians in 1826. Later divisions of its territory created Quitman, Randolph, Schley, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, Webster and parts of Clay, Chattahoochee and Marion counties. Richard Henry (Lighthouse Harry) Lee, the father of Robert E. Lee and the man who in the Continental Congress had made the motion for independence, is remembered in this county's name and that of the county seat, Leesburg.



Elbert County Courthouse



County Names and Origins



Lee County Courthouse

Liberty County

Liberty County was made up of the colonial parishes of St. John, St. James and St. Andrew in 1777. McIntosh and Long counties were drawn from Liberty's original territory. The name honors the settlers of Midway who were the most uncompromising champions of independence and were the first community to send delegates to the Continental Congress. Dr. Lyman Hall and Button Gwinnett were their representatives at the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Hinesville, the county seat, is named for a local family.

Lincoln County

Lincoln County was separated out of Wilkes County in 1796 and is named for Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, who received Lord Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. He was later to serve as George Washington's secretary of war. Lincolnton is the county seat.

Long County

Long County was designated from lands in Liberty County in 1920 and is 157th in order of creation. It is named for Dr. Crawford W. Long, who introduced anesthesia for surgery. Ludowici is named for a German tile manufacturer who settled there and made red clay roofing tiles that became popular throughout southern Georgia.

Lowndes County

Lowndes County was created from Irwin County in 1825. The name honors William Lowndes of South Carolina, who won nomination as vice president but died before the election. Valdosta, the county seat, bears the name of one of Governor George Troup's plantations, which he, in turn, had named for Val D'Osta, an Alpine valley in Italy. Lowndes's state senator, William A. Knight, and state representative, Jonathan Knight, his son, became the first father/son team to serve simultaneously in the state legislature.

Lumpkin County

Lumpkin County got its territory, formerly part of the Cherokee Nation, from Cherokee, Habersham and Hall counties in 1832. The discovery of gold at Auraria near the county seat of Dahlonega spurred rapid settlement and gave impetus to the removal of the Indians from this area. Its name honors Governor Wilson Lumpkin. A mint at Dahlonega processed more than \$33 million in gold from 1836 until 1861.

Macon County

Macon County is named for Nathaniel Macon, a North Carolina statesman and U.S. senator. Its territory was drawn from Houston and Marion counties in 1837. Oglethorpe, the county seat, is named for the colony's founder. Sam Henry Rumph put Macon County in the record books and may have been responsible for Georgia's designation as "the peach state." He developed the Elberta peach in Macon County, named it for his wife and laid a foundation for extensive commercial orchards in the area.

Madison County

Madison County came into being with the division of Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Jackson and Oglethorpe counties in 1811. James Madison, the fourth president of the United States, is honored in the name. Danielsville, the county seat, is named for Gen. Allen Daniel of the state militia. As a young captain, he served in the Revolutionary War and in later life donated land for the town site.

Marion County

Marion County is named for the patriot hero Gen. Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox." The county seat, Buena Vista, commemorates the famous battle during the Mexican War. The county was created from Lee and Muscogee counties in 1827. Good relations with the Creek Indians in this region permitted the opening of a trace in 1805 that led westward toward Mobile, Ala. It became the old Federal Road, western Georgia's first vehicular thoroughfare.

McDuffie County

McDuffie County was given territory from Columbia and Warren counties in 1870. It is named for George McDuffie, a native Georgian who became a governor and senator for South Carolina. Thomson, the county seat, is named for J. Edgar Thomson, an engineer who surveyed the railroad that passes through the city. McDuffie County enjoyed an early gold strike when two Englishmen found valuable ore there in 1823. This region was heavily settled by Quakers, some 200 families of them at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

McIntosh County

McIntosh County was sliced from the original Liberty County in 1793. Its name honors Clan McIntosh, whose members had immigrated there and provided many Revolutionary War patriots. Darien, the county seat, had its beginning as Fort King George, a buffer to hold back Spanish raiders from Florida.

Meriwether County

Meriwether County was drawn from Troup County in 1827. It is named for Gen. David Meriwether of the state militia, who was often employed by the federal government to negotiate with the Indians. Greenville, the county seat, was named for Gen. Nathaniel Greene, a Revolutionary War hero. Warm Springs, regarded as a healing spa from the earliest times, is in Meriwether County, as is President Franklin Roosevelt's Little White House.

Miller County

Miller County took its lands from Baker and Early counties in 1856. It bears the name of Judge Andrew J. Miller, who is best remembered for introducing legislation giving married women separate property rights. Colquitt, the county seat, is named for Judge Walter T. Colquitt, a jurist and legislator of the antebellum period.

County Names and Origins



Mitchell County

Mitchell County was carved out of Baker County in 1857. Historians cite two possible origins of its name: either Gen. David B. Mitchell, twice governor of Georgia, or Gen. Henry Mitchell, who had been a state senator from this county. The county seat of Camilla is believed to be named for David Mitchell's daughter. Pelham, another municipality, is named for Confederate Maj. John Pelham, who commanded Jeb Stuart's horse artillery while still in his teens.

Monroe County

Monroe County was created from Creek Indian lands in 1821 and later divided to make Pike, Lamar and parts of Spalding, Butts, Upson and Bibb counties. It is named for James Monroe, the fifth U.S. president. Forsyth, the county seat, is named for John Forsyth, who as minister to Spain negotiated the purchase of Florida in 1819.

Montgomery County

Montgomery County came into being as territory taken from Washington County in 1793. With the Revolutionary War still fresh in their minds, founders named this county for Gen. Richard Montgomery, who was mortally wounded at the siege of Quebec. Mt. Vernon, the county seat, is named for George Washington's home on the Potomac River.

Morgan County

Morgan County was designated in 1807, an original land lot county. It is named for Gen. Daniel Morgan, who had served with Benedict Arnold's expedition to Quebec in 1775, commanded riflemen at Saratoga in 1777, and defeated the British at Cowpens in 1781. Madison, the county seat, is named for James Madison, fourth president. Congressman Joshua Hill, of Madison, had been one of the few Southerners to decline voting for secession in 1861. As unpopular as his decision was, it resulted in Gen. Sherman's sparing the town during his destructive March to the Sea.

Murray County

Murray County was drawn from Cherokee County in 1832 and subsequently gave up lands to form the counties of Whitfield, Walker, Catoosa, Dade and part of Chattooga. Is it named for Thomas Walton Murray, a lawyer and state legislator who served as speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives. The first county seat was Spring Place, but in 1912, Chatsworth was designated as the seat of government. This county had been the center of Cherokee Indian culture, home of Chief James Vann and site of a Moravian mission among the Cherokee.

Newton County

Newton County is made up of parts of Henry, Jasper and Walton counties and dates to 1821. Its name honors Sgt. John Newton, a companion of Revolutionary War hero William Jasper. Covington, the county seat, is named for patriot Gen. Leonard Covington. Newton was the first county in the United States to give public school students free transportation, the idea of School Commissioner G. C. Adams in 1893. He also founded the first 4-H Club.

Oconee County

Oconee County is part of what was once Franklin County. It was created in 1875 and named for the river that sets its eastern boundary. Watkinsville, the county seat, is named for an Augusta lawyer who helped compile the first Digest of Georgia Laws.

Oglethorpe County

Oglethorpe County is named for Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe, who established Georgia as a colony. Wilkes and Washington counties gave up territory to Oglethorpe County in 1793. Lexington, the county seat, bears the name of a Revolutionary War battle in Lexington, Mass.

Paulding County

Paulding County was designated from part of Cherokee County in 1832, its name honoring John Paulding, a Revolutionary soldier who helped capture Maj. John Andre, the accomplice of Benedict Arnold in a plot to overthrow the young nation. Dallas, the present county seat, is named for a Pennsylvania statesman who became vice president of the United States.

Peach County

Peach County was the last of the 159 counties to be organized. Its land was taken from Houston and Macon counties in 1924, and it was named for the region's most famous crop. Fort Valley, the county seat, was known as Fox Valley until a legislative clerk made an error in copying the name. Residents decided it would be less trouble to learn to say "Fort" than to change its legislative act.

Pickens County

Pickens County was created from Cherokee and Gilmer counties in 1853. Its name honors Gen. Andrew Pickens, a Revolutionary War soldier whose field of operation was the Georgia mountains. Jasper, the county seat, is named for Sgt. William Jasper of South Carolina, who died during the siege of Savannah in the Revolutionary War.



Grady County Courthouse



County Names and Origins



Pulaski County Courthouse

Pierce County

Pierce County was named for President Franklin Pierce when territory was taken from Appling and Ware counties in 1857 for its designation. The county seat, Blackshear, bears the name of Gen. David Blackshear, who fought Indians in Georgia and Florida during the War of 1812.

Pike County

Pike County was created in 1822 from part of Monroe County. The county name and that of its county seat honor Zebulon Pike, who in 1805 led an expedition to trace the Mississippi River to its source.

Polk County

Polk County was created in 1851 from parts of Paulding and Floyd counties, which were earlier part of Cherokee County. President James Knox Polk is honored in its naming. Cedartown, the county seat, dates to Indian times, when a grove of cedars was a trading place and the site of festivals.

Pulaski County

Pulaski County's territory was taken from Laurens County in 1808 and named for Polish Count Casimir Pulaski, who fought with the patriots in the Revolutionary War. He died of wounds at Savannah. Hawkinsville, the county seat, is named for Col. Benjamin Hawkins, a U.S. senator from Georgia who was made superintendent of Indian affairs for all the area south of the Ohio River.

Putnam County

Putnam County, created in 1807, is named for Gen. Israel Putnam of Connecticut, who first distinguished himself fighting with the British in Pontiac's War. Later, as a patriot, he was one of the commanders who led the Revolutionary fighters at the Battle of Breeds Hill near Boston, the engagement misnamed the Battle of Bunker Hill. Eatonton, the county seat, is named for Comm. William Eaton, naval agent to the Barbary states during the 1805 war with Tripoli.

Quitman County

Quitman County was made up of land taken from Randolph and Stewart counties in 1858. Its name honors Gen. John A. Quitman, a Mexican War leader and governor of Mississippi. Georgetown, the county seat, is named for the city in the District of Columbia. Originally, it was known as Tobanana and had been established in the 1830s.

Rabun County

Rabun County at the northeastern corner of Georgia was acquired from the cession of Cherokee lands in 1819. It is named for William Rabun, the state's 11th governor, who served only two years before his death. He is best remembered for opposing Gen. Andrew Jackson over the destruction of a Creek Indian village in what is now Lee County. Clayton, the county seat, was named for Judge Augustin S. Clayton.

Randolph County

Randolph County was created in 1828 from Lee County and named for John Randolph of Virginia. Its original land included territory later given to Quitman, Stewart, Webster and parts of Clay and Terrell counties. Cuthbert, the county seat, is named for John A. Cuthbert, an editor, congressman and jurist.

Richmond County

Richmond County, now consolidated with the city of Augusta, was an original headright county acquired from the Creek Indians by treaty in 1733 and organized as the colonial parish of St. Paul in 1758. The site of Augusta at the head of navigation on the Savannah River had a fort to protect a trading post and a handful of settlers. At the time of the Revolution, the parish became Richmond County to honor the duke of Richmond, who had defended the colonists' cause in Parliament and had advocated their independence. The county seat was named for Princess Augusta, wife of the prince of Wales.

Rockdale County

Rockdale County wasn't designated until 1870, the Reconstruction period. Its land was taken from Henry and Newton counties and its name from Rockdale Church. It is aptly named since great beds of granite lie just below the surface in most of the county. Conyers, the county seat, is named for a local physician who donated right-of-way for the first railroad through the town.

Schley County

Schley County got its territory from the division of Marion, Macon and Sumter counties in 1857. It is named for William Schley, a jurist, congressman and governor of Georgia. The county seat, Ellaville, is named for the daughter of the man who sold land for the town site. It was incorporated in 1859, but the nearby community of Pond Town had been settled since 1812.

Screven County

Screven County was first organized from parts of Burke and Effingham counties in 1793. Its land had been part of the colonial parishes of St. Phillip and St. Matthew. As was common with counties created in this period, it was named for a Revolutionary War figure, Gen. James Screven. This county has had three county seats, the current one being Sylvania, named for its forest setting.

Seminole County

Seminole County at the southwestern tip of the state was created in 1920 from parts of Decatur and Early counties. It was given the name of the Seminole Indians who inhabited the area, themselves part of the Muscogee tribe of the Lower Creeks. Donalsonville is named for Jonathan E. Donalson, a prominent citizen of the area.

County Names and Origins



Harris County Courthouse

Spalding County

Spalding County was created in 1851, taking its territory from Fayette, Henry and Pike counties. It is named for Thomas Spalding, of Frederica, who was the first Georgian known to have harvested cotton and cane successfully. He also served in the state legislature, in Congress and was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1798. Griffin, the county seat, is named for L. L. Griffin, the first president of the Monroe Railroad, later the Central of Georgia.

Stephens County

Stephens County was one of four counties created on the same day in 1905. Its land was taken from Habersham and Franklin counties. The name honors Alexander Hamilton Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy. He served one year as governor of Georgia before dying in 1882. Toccoa, the county seat, is a Cherokee word meaning "lovely water."

Stewart County

Stewart County was named for President Teddy Roosevelt's grandfather, Gen. Daniel Stewart. He had been an officer in both the Revolution and the War of 1812. This county was created in 1830, its territory taken from Randolph County. Lumpkin, the county seat, is named for Governor Wilson Lumpkin.

Sumter County

Sumter County was created in 1831 from lands formerly part of Lee County. It is named for Gen. Thomas Sumter of South Carolina, a soldier of the Revolution and the earlier French and Indian War. The name Americus, the county seat, is a Latin term referring to "western hemisphere."

Talbot County

Talbot County was created in 1827 from some of Muscogee County's territory. The county and its county seat, Talbotton, are named for Governor Matthew Talbot, a member of the convention that framed the Constitution of Georgia. The first meeting of the Georgia Supreme Court was called to order in the Clairborne Hotel in Talbotton on Jan. 26, 1846.

Taliaferro County

Taliaferro County was once known as Five Points because it was carved from five counties: Hancock, Greene, Oglethorpe, Wilkes and Warren. It dates to 1825 and is named for Col. Benjamin Taliaferro of Lighthorse Harry Lee's Legion during the Revolutionary War. Crawford, the county seat, is named for William H. Crawford, a U.S. secretary of the treasury and minister to the court of Napoleon.

Tattnall County

Tattnall County is named for the governor who signed the legislative act creating it in 1801, Josiah Tattnall. Montgomery and Washington counties gave up part of their territory to create Tattnall. Reidsville is the county seat, named for Robert E. Reid, a superior court judge and territorial governor of Florida.

Taylor County

Taylor County was given parts of Macon, Marion and Talbot counties at its creation in 1852. It is named for Zachary Taylor, whose victory in the Battle of Buena Vista during the Mexican War boosted him toward the presidency of the United States. Butler, the county seat, is named for another figure in that conflict, Gen. William Orlando Butler. One of the county's most prominent citizens was John B. Gordon. He had raised a company of mountaineers at the start of the Civil War and served as their captain. Despite a lack of formal military training, he proved to be a brilliant strategist. By 1865, he wore the stars of a lieutenant general and was one of Gen. Lee's most dogged fighters.

Telfair County

Telfair County was designated in 1807 with territory taken from Wilkinson County. It is named for Governor Edward Telfair, who was born in Scotland, championed the colonies' complaints against King George III and served as a delegate to the Council of Safety and to the Continental Congress. He was twice governor of Georgia. McRae, the county seat, is named for a pioneer Scot family of the area. Most of the early settlers here were immigrants from Scotland, Presbyterians who had come first to North Carolina and then moved south to obtain better lands.

Terrell County

Terrell County was created from Randolph and Lee counties in 1856. It is named for Dr. William Terrell, of Sparta, who had served in both the state legislature and in Congress. Dawson, the county seat, is named for another legislator and jurist, William C. Dawson. Near the close of the Civil War, Governor Joseph Brown arranged the organization of "Exile Camp" near Dawson to shelter some 300 refugees from Atlanta. A short time later, Union troops were quartered there and are remembered for their kind behavior toward the refugees and local citizens.

Thomas County

Thomas County was carved out of Decatur and Irwin counties in 1825, taking its name and that of the county seat, Thomasville, from War of 1812 Gen. Jett Thomas. Known today for its annual Rose Festival and unsurpassed hunting opportunities, this area was a popular winter retreat for wealthy northern families from about 1875 onward.

Tift County

Tift County was given territory from Berrien, Irwin and Worth counties at its creation in 1905. It is named for Nelson Tift, as is the county seat of Tifton, one of Albany's founders. Tift served in Congress. His son, Henry Harding Tift, founded the city of Tifton in 1872.



County Names and Origins

Toombs County

Toombs County was designated in 1905 from portions of Tattnall, Montgomery and Emanuel counties. It is named for Gen. Robert Toombs, who had served in both houses of Congress and was likely the most prominent spokesman for secession. He was secretary of state for the Confederacy, a brigadier general and, by his own insistence, "an unpardoned rebel" in that he had refused amnesty at the end of the war. Lyons, the county seat, was built around a railroad depot on a line connecting Macon and Savannah.

Towns County

Towns County's territory was taken from Rabun and Union counties, originally part of Cherokee County, in 1856, and the county is named for George Washington Towns, Georgia's governor from 1847 until 1851. Hiawassee, the county seat, has a Cherokee name meaning "meadow." Georgia's highest mountain, Brasstown Bald, is in Towns County, and its eastern border closely follows the Appalachian Trail that continues from Fannin County to the state of Maine.

Treutlen County

Treutlen County got its land from Emanuel and Montgomery counties in 1917. Its earliest settlers are thought to have come in 1784. The county bears the name of John Adam Treutlen, who served in the Provincial Congress of 1775 and became Georgia's first governor. While visiting in Orangeburg, S.C., Treutlen was murdered, allegedly by Tories. Soperton, the county seat, is named for a prominent local citizen. From its inception, Treutlen's wealth has been primarily its pine forests.

Troup County

Troup County is an original land lot county acquired from the Creek Indians in 1826. Founders named it for Governor George M. Troup, an early champion of state sovereignty who clashed with President John Adams over the issue. Atypically, the county was named for him 30 years before his death. LaGrange, the county seat, bears the name of the Marquis de LaFayette's home estate in France.

Turner County

Turner County was organized from parts of Irwin, Wilcox, Worth and Dooly counties in 1905. It is named for Confederate Capt. Henry Gray Turner, a veteran of Gettysburg, a member of Congress and the state legislature, then a Georgia Supreme Court justice. Ashburn, the county seat, is named to honor W.W. Ashburn, of Eastman, who built a sawmill at this site and fostered expansion of the town that grew around it.

Twiggs County

Twiggs County was created in 1809 from land formerly in Wilkinson County. It is named for Gen. John Twiggs, a Revolutionary War figure. Jeffersonville, the county seat, is named for a family of early settlers. An unusual sand/clay mix of soil was the bane of farmers there, but when recognized, it gave birth to a thriving kaolin industry.

Union County

Union County was designated in 1832 from original Cherokee County territory. Fannin and Towns counties were to be carved from it later. John Thomas, the area's representative in the state legislature, named it Union "because none but union-like men reside in it," he said. Indeed, the county and its neighbors remained staunchly Unionist throughout the secession controversy and the Civil War.

Upson County

Upson County came into being in 1824, its lands taken from parts of Pike and Crawford counties. Its name honors Stephen Upson, a lawyer and legislator of renown during the antebellum period. Thomaston, the county seat, is named for Gen. Jett Thomas, the leader of the state militia in 1812 and builder of the state Capitol at Milledgeville.

Walker County

Walker County originated in 1833, drawn from the original Cherokee County and part of Murray County. It is named for Maj. Freeman Walker, of Augusta, a lawyer and U.S. senator. LaFayette, the county seat, was first known by its Indian name, Chattooga, but was renamed to honor the Marquis de LaFayette. The town was the site of a fort built in 1835 to hold Cherokee people until their forced removal west.

Walton County

Walton County is an original land lot county designated in 1818 and named for George Walton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Born in Virginia, he came to Savannah to study law. He was twice governor of Georgia and a U.S. senator in 1795. The county seat, Monroe, was settled when the county was formed from Cherokee Indian lands and named for James Monroe, the fifth U.S. president.

Ware County

Ware County was created in 1824 from Appling County and is named for U.S. Sen. Nicholas Ware, of Augusta. Waycross, the county seat, gets its name from the rail junction that fostered early growth. Much of the county's area is within the great Okefenokee Swamp.



Marion County Courthouse

County Names and Origins



Warren County

Warren County drew its territory from Columbia, Hancock, Richmond and Wilkes counties in 1793. It and the county seat, Warrenton, are named for Gen. Joseph Warren of Massachusetts, who was killed at the Revolutionary War's Battle of Bunker (Breed's) Hill. Georgia's first iron foundry and woolen mill were built at the shoals on the Ogeechee River in Warren County.

Washington County

Washington County was created in 1783 and named for the first president. Early settlers were veterans of the Revolutionary War who were given land grants, but the treaty whereby Georgia had acquired this territory was repudiated by the Creek Indian leader, Alexander McGillivray. A resultant dispute grew into the Oconee War, which kept the frontier uneasy for 20 years thereafter. Sandersville, the county seat, is named for a local merchant who had donated land for a courthouse. Somewhere in the early recordings, the correct spelling of his name, Saunders, was overlooked.

Wayne County

Wayne County came into being in 1803 from the cession of Creek Indian land. Present boundaries include part of old Appling County. Glynn, Camden and Charlton counties were later to draw territory from Wayne. Its name honors Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne, a flamboyant fighter from Pennsylvania who conducted his daring exploits against the British in several southern campaigns. He was briefly a member of Congress from Georgia. Jesup, the county seat, is named for Gen. Jesup, who fought Creek Indians along the border in 1836.

Webster County

Webster County was drawn from land formerly in Stewart County in 1853. First named Kinchafoonee County after a landmark creek, residents petitioned to change its name to honor orator and statesman Daniel Webster after visitors ridiculed the strange-sounding name. The county seat, Preston, began as McIntosh for Gen. Lachlan McIntosh of Revolutionary War fame. Its name was later changed to commemorate William O. Preston of South Carolina. The first Confederate flag-raising ceremony took place in front of the courthouse in Preston on March 31, 1861.

Wheeler County

Wheeler County was created from land formerly Montgomery County in 1912. Gen. Joseph Wheeler of the Confederate Cavalry is remembered in its name, while the county seat's name of Alamo commemorates the Battle of the Alamo during the Texas War for Independence.

White County

White County was organized in 1857. Two previous attempts to pull land from Habersham for a new county had failed. It was not until state Rep. David T. White of Newton County lent his support that the creating act was passed. Subsequently, the new county bears his name. The county seat, Cleveland, is named for Col. Ben Cleveland, who fought in the Revolutionary War. In the broad Nacoochee Valley of White County, remains of Gauxule, an ancient Cherokee Indian town, were found, a site visited by DeSoto. Other artifacts around the area are attributed to an ancient, unidentified race.

Whitfield County

Whitfield County was sliced from Murray County in 1851. The name chosen honors the Rev. George Whitefield, who founded the Bethesda Orphan House in Savannah. The spelling was changed to reflect the proper pronunciation of his name. Dalton, the county seat, was known as Cross Plains until local residents decided to compliment a civil engineer who had worked in the area, John Dalton.

Wilcox County

Wilcox County was given land from Dooly, Irwin and Pulaski counties in 1857. It is named for Gen. Mark Wilcox, a state legislator and one of the founders of the Georgia Supreme Court. In naming the county seat Abbeville, early settlers were paying their respects to their earlier home in Abbeville, S.C.

Wilkes County

Wilkes County was one of the original counties created from Indian lands in 1773. It was designated a county in 1777 and thereafter divided many times to form other counties. The name pays homage to John Wilkes, who had championed colonists' issues in the British House of Commons prior to the Revolutionary War. The county seat, Washington, is thought to be the first town in America to be named for the first president.

Wilkinson County

Wilkinson County, dating to 1803, is an original county whose territory was acquired by the cessions of the Creek Indians. It is named for Gen. James Wilkinson, an officer in the Revolutionary War and a native of Maryland. He had been a party to the treaty that obtained the land for this county. Irwinton, the county seat, was built on the site of an English trading post dating to 1715. It is named for Governor Jared Irwin.

Worth County

Worth County was organized in 1853 from land formerly in Dooly and Irwin counties. It is named for Maj. Gen. William J. Worth, a commander in the Mexican War. William A. Harris, who helped organize the new county, had served under him. The oldest military road in Georgia, the Thigpen Trail, led through Worth County from the Broad River in South Carolina to the Gulf of Mexico following the divide above the Chattahoochee River.



Hall County Courthouse