

Excerpts of HISTORY Of Oconee County & Watkinsville & Courthouse Site

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<http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/counties/oconee>

OCONEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE HISTORY

There were two courthouses in Watkinsville, built in 1806 and 1849, when it served as seat of government for Clarke County. When Oconee County was created in 1875, Watkinsville was designated county seat. A new courthouse was built that same year. The current brick courthouse, built by the Project Works Administration, was completed in 1939 and has undergone several renovations since, the latest being in 1998, when a courthouse addition also was constructed at the rear of the 1939 structure. Also in the 1990s, a county government annex was built on Ga. 15 just south of Watkinsville.

The legislation creating Oconee County designated Watkinsville as county seat (Ga. Laws 1875, p. 109). Settled around 1800, Watkinsville was named for Augusta lawyer Robert Watkins, who compiled Georgia's first collection of statutory laws. It was designated county seat of Clarke County in 1802 (Ga. Laws 1802, p. 57). An act of Nov. 24, 1806 provided for three town commissioners with governmental powers (Ga. Laws 1806, p. 5). Though making no specific reference to incorporation, this act was the first to provide for a Watkinsville town government -- and for reasons cited below probably should be considered as the basis for de facto incorporation. Acts of 1815 and 1816 (Ga. Laws 1815, p. 76 and 1816, p. 52) extended the authority of town commissioners,....

History of Oconee County – Excerpts New Georgia Encyclopedia

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/counties-cities-neighborhoods/oconee-county>

Oconee County

Original entry by [Elizabeth B. Cooksey](#), Savannah, 11/11/2005

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Oconee County comprises 186 square miles in northeast Georgia. The state's 137th county, **it was created from part of western Clarke County in 1875 by the Georgia General Assembly.** Oconee County was named for the river flowing along part of its eastern border, whose name in turn comes from a Native American word meaning "spring of the hills." **The new county was created to satisfy western Clarke County residents' demand for their own county after the county seat moved from the less populous Watkinsville to the thriving university town of Athens in 1872.**

History of Watkinsville and its Downtown

<http://cityofwatkinsville.com/history>

In 1802, Watkinsville, originally known as the "Big Springs" community, was named after Colonel Robert Watkins of Augusta, a lawyer and early compiler of "A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia" through 1799. Watkinsville was a small village located on the dangerous western frontier of the new United States between Creek and Cherokee territories. Eagle Tavern, believed to stand on the site of the old Fort Edward, opened in 1801 and today serves as a museum commemorating the era of wagon and stage coach travel. Watkinsville first appeared in Clarke County records in 1791: only fifty-eight years after James Edward Oglethorpe founded the colony of Georgia. **In 1802, John Cobb gave up eight lots of his plantation to create the city. It then became the county seat for Clarke County and remained so until 1872, when Athens took over that role. The locals were not happy and voted to create a new county, named after the Oconee River on its eastern border, and Watkinsville became its seat on February 25, 1875.**