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Flowing Through Time A History of the Lower Chattahoochee River by Lynn Willoughby

The waters of the Chattahoochee spring from the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina at about 3,500 feet above sea level. From there, the river plunges 1,700 feet down to the Nacoochee Valley on to the Atlanta plateau, encompassing the modern-day towns of Gainesville, Atlanta, and West Point.

At West Point the river turns south to form the present border between Alabama and Georgia, as it flows by the river cities of Columbus, Phenix City, Eufaula, and Fort Gaines.

At the southwestern corner of Georgia, the Chattahoochee merges with the Flint River to enter Florida as the Apalachicola River. As the Apalachicola Bay, the old river broadens into an estuary and, after 418 adventurous miles, disappears into the Gulf of Mexico.

Author Lynn Willoughby takes the reader down the Lower Chattahoochee River and through the centuries from the early 17th and 18th centuries to the present. Throughout A History of the Lower Chattahoochee River, Willoughby pays particular attention to the Chattahoochee’s role in the economic development of the area. In the early to mid-19th century—the beginning of the age of the steamboat and a period of rapid growth for towns along the river—the river was a major waterway for the cotton trade.

Once railroads and highways took the place of river travel, the economic importance of the Chattahoochee shifted to the building of dams and power plants. In the last three decades, the river has been the focus of environmental concerns and the subject of “water wars” because of the rapid growth of Atlanta. Through numerous historic photographs and maps Willoughby brings the Chattahoochee’s fascinating story to life.

More than any other single factor, the Chattahoochee River has played a major role in the heritage of the lower Chattahoochee Valley of east and southeast Alabama and west and southwest Georgia. A vital part of the community’s past, present, and future, the river binds the Chattahoochee Valley together as a distinctive region.

Through a variety of images, including historic photographs, postcards and artwork, *Images of America: Lower Chattahoochee River* illustrates the importance of the Chattahoochee to the region. The book chronicles the path of the Chattahoochee, the history of navigation on the river, bridges that have facilitated travel across the river, the river as a recreational resource, the creation of Lake Eufaula/Walter F. George, West Point Lake, and Lake Seminole, the role of the river in the industrialization of the Chattahoochee River Valley and its importance as a source of hydroelectric power.

Chapters six and seven detail some of the significant floods and disasters of the region as well as the military outposts that have been built along the waterway.

Drawing from a wide range of private and public collections, Mike Bunn, Associate curator of history at the Columbus Museum, and Doug Purcell, executive director of the Historic Chattahoochee Commission, have selected over 180 of the best images that document the river’s place in the lower Chattahoochee Valley’s history.

Want to know more about *Images of America: Lower Chattahoochee River*? Stop by the Mobile District Technical Library, Room 1013.