



HISTORY OF WALNUT GROVE, GEORGIA

Brodnax Homestead built in 1881.
This photo circa 1978.

The inviting shade of a group of walnut trees was the site of the little store which marked the beginning of one of Walton's older communities. Situated in the extreme western part of the county, approximately nine miles from Monroe, the location is almost equidistant from each of the communities of Loganville, Social Circle, Covington and Conyers. Legend says that Thomas Evans, who set up shop there long ago, referred to the crossroads spot as "the walnut grove." Consequently, this was the appellation used when a post office was established.

Early postmasters and dates of appointment include:

John C. Brewer	December 16, 1850
Allen B. Whitehead	February 22, 1854
Augustus W. Clay	April 15, 1856
Thomas L. Evans	September 28, 1857
discontinued , January 5, 1867 - re-established February 26, 1867	
Samuel Brodnax	February 26, 1867
John C. K. Strain	January 19, 1877
G. O. Mabry	September 24, 1877
discontinued, November 6, 1877 – reestablished, January 8, 1884	
John W. Thompson	January 8, 1884
William A. Woodruff	September 14, 1886
William S. Carter	December 29, 1887
Calvin D. Shelnett	December 29, 1891

On January 8, 1895, the identity was changed from Walnut Grove to Walnutgrove

First postmaster under the new form was

Joel C. Brodnax	January 8, 1895
Jesse Robinson	July 12, 1902 and January 30, 1905
James B Shelnett	November 23, 1904
Reuben A. Forrester	February 4, 1906

Among the early merchants who became contemporaries of Thomas Evans were Thomas Dial, John Thompson, Linsey Dial.

Between 1860 and 1870, wheelwright Ezra Hoffinan added a shop which also turned out cabinet work. Local brides coveted Mr. Hoffman's useful pine chests, and, even today, two specimens of his skill are used and treasured by the Rockmore family.

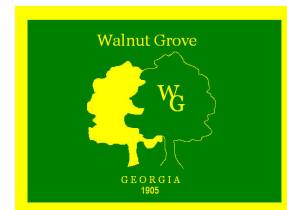
Other pioneer business men included Samuel Brodnax, Augustus and R. P. Clay. W. S. Carter operated a blacksmith shop. Luther Guthrie and George Brodnax conducted an undertaking business.

In 1891, grape culture interested the citizens, who demonstrated the desire to keep pace with progress and new developments. Among the town's prominent residents at this time were Thomas Evans, James W Carter, Captain J. T. Mitchell, Howard T. Shelnutt.

Soon after the turn of the century, J. B. Shelnutt built a rock store and S. H. and J. C. Brodnax established a bank. The town was incorporated in 1905 with limits of one-half mile from a point in the center of the road in front of the Brodnax Banking Company. By 1907, five granite buildings stood in Walnutgrove which then had a total of 125 residents. Business firms included R. A. Forrester and Co., general merchant and cotton buyer; J. B. Shelnutt and W A. Still; W C. Shelnutt's Drug Store; L. O. Guthrie, undertaker; C. R. Dial, blacksmith; and the Walnutgrove Ginnery, owned by Clay, Mitchell and Thompson.

S. H. Brodnax was mayor in that year, and J. B. Shelnutt, mayor pro tem. Jesse Robinson was clerk; J. C. Brodnax, treasurer; A. C. Clay and W A. Still, members of the town council. Among other names closely associated with the life of this town are Doolittle, Allen, Batchelor, Allgood, Byrd, and Harris.

Today, excellent paved roads cross in the heart of Walnutgrove, to funnel traffic efficiently in four directions: toward Monroe, Loganville, Conyers and Covington. Thomas Evans's walnut grove has long since disappeared, and highway construction has drastically altered and diminished the business area. But the community of Walnutgrove retains much of the appeal for which it is remembered, and many feel the fond attachment evidenced by the late Dr Grady E. Clay of Atlanta, who maintained a lifelong interest and concern for the well-being of his boyhood home.



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