



GEORGIA BUSINESS HISTORY INITIATIVE

Each year the Georgia Historical Society selects iconic companies in our state to be honored through the Georgia Business History Initiative. By showcasing these companies, GHS seeks to teach Georgia students, citizens and tourists alike about the pivotal role of Georgia's leading businesses in the economic, cultural and social development of Georgia and the United States.



Sharing the Stories of the Businesses that Built Georgia





An illustration showing the use of Georgia-Pacific's products throughout the home. *Courtesy of Georgia-Pacific.*

GEORGIA-PACIFIC

A PROFILE IN GEORGIA'S BUSINESS HISTORY



Based in Atlanta, Georgia-Pacific began as a wholesale lumber company in Augusta, Georgia, in 1927. As the company grew, it began manufacturing lumber and expanded into other building products as well. Georgia-Pacific entered the pulp and paper business to help make use of the residuals from its wood product operations. Wood residuals are materials such as chips and trim leftover during timber processing. Over time, the company has grown into one of the world's leading forest-products companies. Its recognizable consumer brands include Brawny® paper towels, Quilted Northern® bath tissue and Dixie® cups and plates.

Some of the popular consumer brands made by Georgia-Pacific. *Courtesy of Georgia-Pacific.*



Described as a “soft-spoken, stylish charmer with the guts of a bandit,” Owen R. Cheatham, Georgia-Pacific’s founder, created a fast-growing and profitable lumber business with \$6,000 of his own money and \$6,000 in borrowed funds. Unfortunately, the Great Depression struck only two years after the company’s founding, causing people to buy less lumber.

To survive the economic downturn, Cheatham developed an export business in hardwood lumber, selling to Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, and Spain. He bought wood at low prices in the United States then shipped it overseas to sell at a profit. While some companies struggled to survive the Great Depression, Georgia-Pacific thrived.

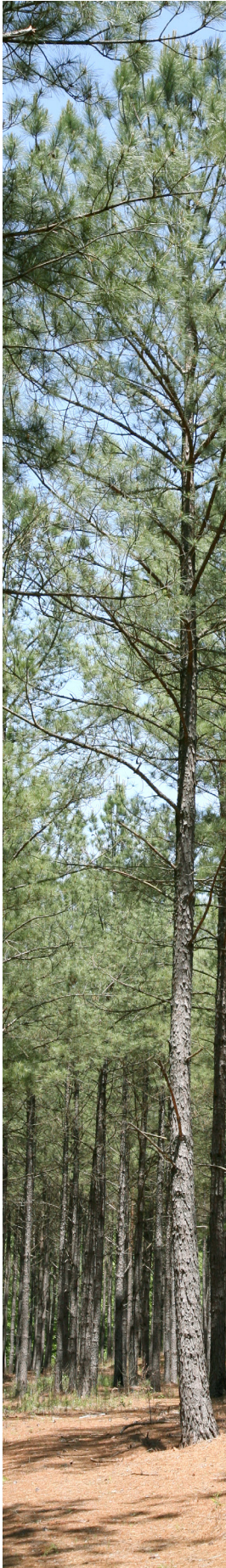
During World War II, Georgia-Pacific became the largest supplier of lumber to the U.S. armed forces. The post-war housing boom fueled the company’s continued growth, and in the late 1940s, Georgia-Pacific bought its first West Coast facility.

The company continued to expand on the West Coast, eventually moving its headquarters to Portland, Oregon, in the 1950s. Around the same time, it entered the pulp and paper business, an area where Georgia-Pacific would grow significantly in the second half of the 20th century.

Throughout the next several decades, Georgia-Pacific continued to grow and bought several companies that allowed the company to innovate and expand into the many paper, tissue, and related products Georgia-Pacific makes today.

In the 1960s, Georgia-Pacific pioneered the production of plywood from Southern pine trees. This led to a dramatic shift in the wood-products industry and made housing materials more affordable.

By the late 1970s, Georgia-Pacific’s operations were heavily concentrated in the South along the



“pine belt.” As a result, it made sense to move the company’s headquarters back to its home state of Georgia. In 1982, Georgia-Pacific opened its new corporate headquarters in downtown Atlanta.

After its return to the South, Georgia-Pacific built on the success of its core pulp and paper and building products businesses. In 1997—in a move that once again changed the industry—the company sold all its timberlands, making the case that Georgia-Pacific could buy wood more cheaply on the open market.

The move away from timber ownership enabled Georgia-Pacific to focus more on developing its consumer tissue business, leading to the acquisition in 2001 of major brands such as Brawny® paper towels, Quilted Northern® bath tissue and Dixie® tableware. At the same time, the company continued to grow its presence in the away-from-home market, including dispensers for tissue, towels, and napkins for hospitals, restaurants, sports arenas, and other public places.

In December 2005, another significant chapter in Georgia-Pacific’s history began when it was acquired by Koch Industries and became a privately owned company once again.

Throughout its history, Georgia-Pacific has focused on the well-being of its employees, communities, and the environment. Because Georgia-Pacific values its employees, the company is dedicated to meeting high safety standards in all its operations.

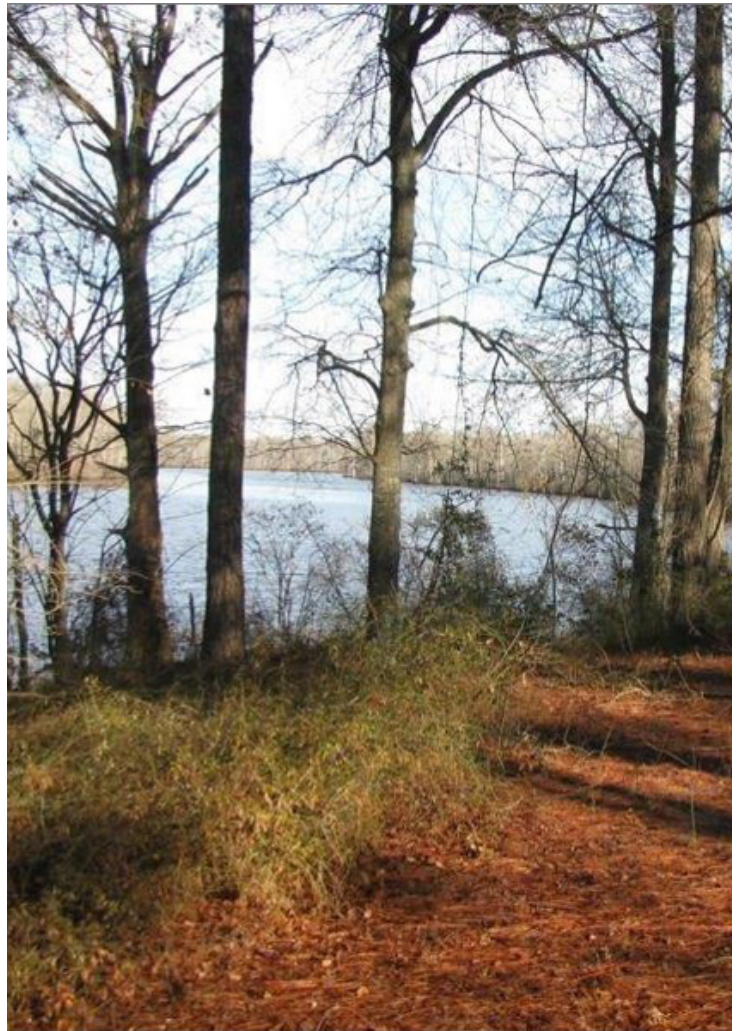
Left: Pine forest in Madison, Georgia. Right: Early logging crew/operation. *Courtesy of Georgia-Pacific.*



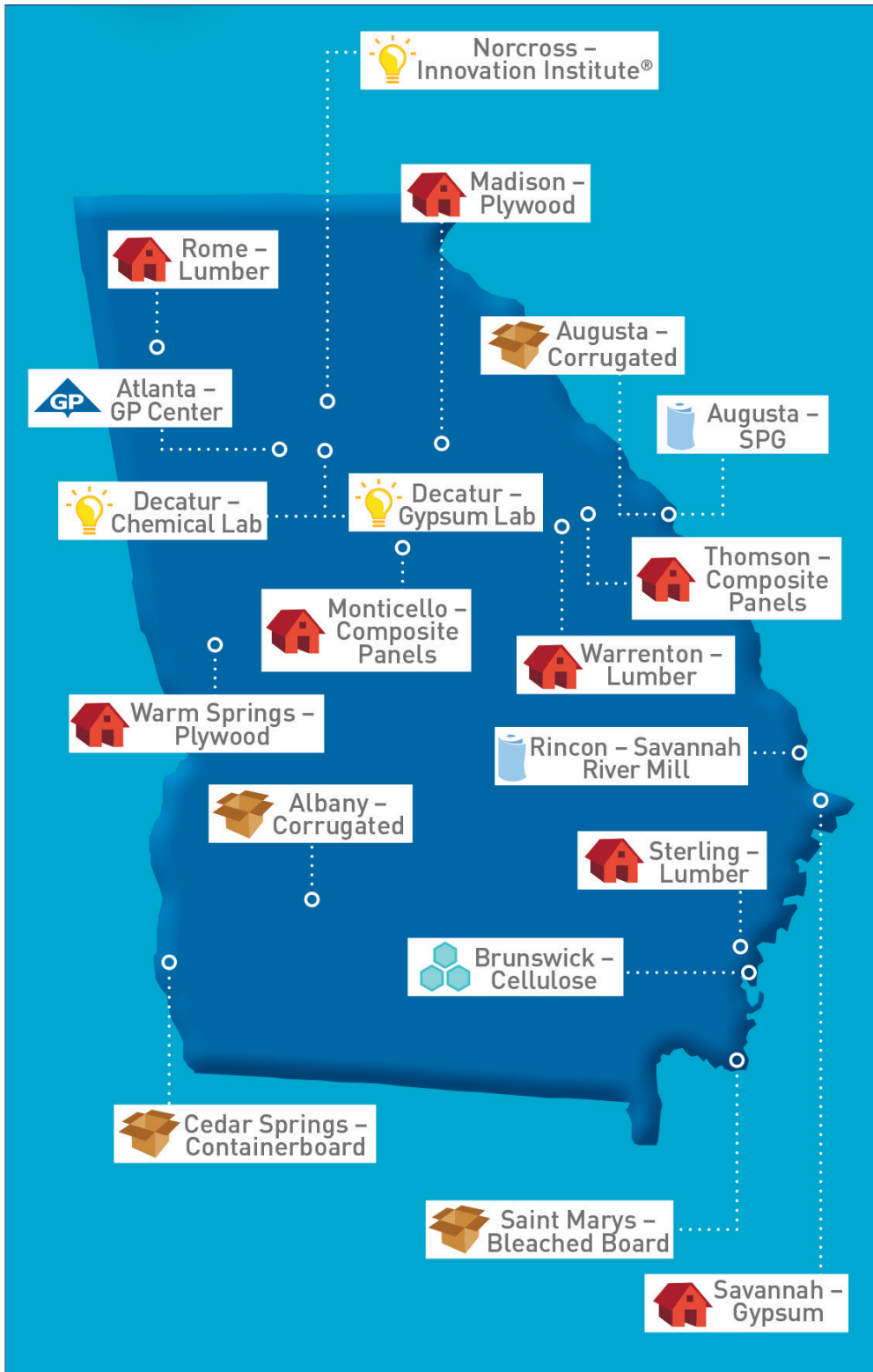
Georgia-Pacific also cares about the vitality of the communities where it operates and strives to contribute to their wellbeing. The company supports local schools, affordable housing, arts and cultural organizations, and public safety.

The company works to minimize the environmental impact of its operations. And although Georgia-Pacific no longer owns any timberlands, it still supports and promotes sustainable forestry practices. In 2010, Georgia-Pacific became the first forest products company to use a broad-scale analysis to identify and map endangered forests and special areas in the United States to help protect lands with rare and unique qualities.

Today, Georgia-Pacific is a global leader in producing tissue, pulp, paper, packaging, building products, and related chemicals. The company employs approximately 35,000 people worldwide. In Georgia, over 7,000 people work at 19 facilities in the state, including the world headquarters in Atlanta.



Left: Recycled paper used in Georgia-Pacific products. Right: Participants in a Georgia-Pacific Foundation service project. Bottom: An example of a Georgia-Pacific forest conservation project in Georgia. *Courtesy of Georgia-Pacific.*



Georgia-Pacific operations throughout Georgia. *Courtesy of Georgia-Pacific.*



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