

# History of

## Woodward Mill Elementary School

Woodward Mill Elementary in August 2009 in response to rapid growth in the Mall of Georgia area. The school relieved elementary schools in the Mill Creek, Collins Hill, and Dacula clusters and opened as part of the new Mountain View Cluster.

The school's name refers to a landmark grist mill of the early 20th century that was located in the area near the school's location (by I-85 and Ga. 20). The mill was originally built by Shadrack Bogan, one of the earliest settlers to the area known as Hog Mountain. In addition to the mill, he opened a tavern and a hotel called Hog Mountain House. Mr. Bogan and several other men in the community also built a road near his establishment. In 1812, Fort Daniel was built nearby to protect settlers.

In 1855, the property was purchased by William Ivory Woodward. He married Linna Allie Loveless shortly after this and moved into a home on the site, where he continued to operate the mill.

What became known as Woodward Mill operated for almost 140 years, from the 1820s through the 1960s. The site featured a grist mill, a sawmill, a general store, and a blacksmith shop. According to Mary Ogletree Pharr, the general store sold everything from swimsuits to plow points. Over the years, the mill was renovated and equipment replaced as it changed owners.

### FAST FACTS

Address: 2020 Buford Highway  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

The following have served as principals of Woodward Mill Elementary School:

2009–Dec. 2014	Barbara Ergle
Jan. 2015–Present	Michael Bender

School Colors: Black and Gold  
School Mascot: Cubs

The mill was a center of the community as well. Local residents, families, and schoolchildren often came to celebrate summer with picnics and swimming. The mill pond was used for baptisms and the general store served as a place to meet with friends and hear the daily news.

In 1929 the road was enlarged and rebuilt. George

### Woodward Mill Elementary School

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Gwinnett County Board Of Education  
Carole Boyce - Chairman  
Daniel D. Seckinger - Vice Chairman  
Dr. Robert McClure  
Dr. Mary Kay Murphy  
Louise Radloff

CEO/Superintendent  
J. Alvin Wilbanks

Architect  
Lindsay, Pope, Brayfield & Assoc., Inc.

Contractor  
Bowen & Watson, Inc.

2009



Pharr, who had recently bought the mill, rebuilt the adjacent dam as well. George and Ruby Pharr married in 1947 and lived in the mill, transforming the second floor into a small apartment. The 1960s brought the construction of I-85 and the end of milling. In February 1976 the old mill was destroyed by fire.

Today, the only remaining artifact from Woodward Mill is the waterwheel that is still standing. However, the area's strong sense of community remains, energizing Woodward Mill Elementary School and its community as it launched its own history.

Today, Woodward Mill serves approximately 1,000 students in grades K–5. It provides students with a number of different activities aimed at helping students reach their full potential. From Running Clubs and Chorus to Science Fair and Wizzle Pro Math Teams, Woodward Mill Elementary students are engaged in learning and in their community. And a hallmark of that community is its caring and giving nature as evidenced by its successful canned food drives, its Share Table that ensures students do not go hungry, its work to provide mentors to students, and its active PTA to support the school.

Academically, the school maintains high expectations for student achievement as evidenced by its continued recognition as performing above expectations on Georgia's College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). Woodward Mill promotes teacher collaboration and Professional Learning Communities that concentrate on increasing learning for all students. Student learning takes place within the framework of balanced literacy and numeracy and through the ongoing use of Gwinnett County Public Schools' Quality-Plus Teaching Strategies.

Information on the early history of the grist mill that was known as Woodward Mill was compiled by Mary Ogletree Pharr, ©1993.