

***City of Hawkinsville***  
**Learn about the History**  
**Audio Transcript**

The sunken steamboat *City of Hawkinsville* is a good example of late nineteenth century coastal steam technology. The stern-wheeler was built in 1896 in Abbeville, Georgia on the Ocmulgee River. The vessel was owned the Hawkinsville Deepwater Boat Lines but in 1900 was sold to the Gulf Transportation Company for use on the Suwannee River. It became the largest and the last steamboat to be stationed on the river.

*City of Hawkinsville* was 141 feet long, with two decks, the lower one used for storing cargo during trips up and down the river, and an upper deck for the wheelhouse and the crews quarters. In addition to the two steam engines, one on either side of the vessel, *City of Hawkinsville* had a single smoke stack, straight sides, a square, slightly raked, transom, and a molded bow.

Once on the Suwannee, the steamboat assisted a booming lumber industry as well as the development of the railroad through North Central Florida. Records indicate that Captain Currie, the last skipper of the steamboat, worked until 1922 when he could no longer make a living traveling up and down the river. He abandoned the steamboat and let it settle into the riverbed near Old Town, Florida.

Today, *City of Hawkinsville* lies on the western side of the Suwannee River, just downstream from the railroad trestle, above Old Town. The vessel is an excellent example of a turn-of-the-century steamboat that is almost intact from the gunnels downward. It is an impressive wreck to look at and explore with much of its original steam equipment in place.

In 1992 *City of Hawkinsville* became the State of Florida's third Underwater Archaeological Preserve, and in 2001 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If you are interested to see the steamboat's anchor, boiler-room tools, and a scale model you can visit the Dixie County Historical Society Museum located at the Old Town Schoolhouse.