

ABRAHAM BALDWIN

Abraham Baldwin, the son of a Connecticut blacksmith, was born in 1754. At the age of 14, Baldwin enrolled at Yale University, graduating four years later. For the next three years Baldwin studied theology at Yale, and eventually became a minister but never accepted a congregation call. He served on General Washington's staff as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War, and during that time studied law. At the age of 29 he was admitted to the bar in his home state.

In 1783 Baldwin decided to follow a number of other Connecticut Yankees and moved to Georgia to begin a new career. He settled near Augusta and had soon established a thriving law practice. In 1784 Baldwin was elected to the Georgia House of Assembly, and the next year was chosen a delegate from Georgia to the Confederation Congress, the first national government which existed in the United States. In 1787, Baldwin became a member of the Constitutional Convention which later that year produced the United States Constitution. Baldwin proved instrumental in the creation of that timeless document, and the original Constitution bears his signature.

In the meantime, the State of Georgia had decided to create a university and elected Baldwin its first president. From 1785 until 1801 he presided as the first chief executive of the University of Georgia, although it progressed so slowly that he had resigned his presidency before the first student was ever enrolled.

Later in his career, Baldwin served Georgia as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and then as a member of the U.S. Senate. In 1807, Baldwin died while serving in the Senate at the age of 52.

When the University System of Georgia was created in 1933, the Board of

Regents decided to rename the Georgia State College for Men in Tifton in Baldwin's memory and to endow the college with a special emphasis in agriculture and forest resources.