

Literary Small Town: Milledgeville, Georgia (pop. 16,486)



Lake Sinclair, Georgia

Master of Southern Gothic literature [Flannery O'Connor](#) spent much of her life in Milledgeville. This year, Georgia's former state capital is celebrating the 100th anniversary of O'Connor's birth with an array of displays, literary discussions and immersive experiences. Many of these—including "Flannery at 100: Hidden Treasures," an [exhibition](#) of nearly 70 rarely seen woodcut caricatures, regional oil paintings and other artworks created by the author herself—will take place at [Andalusia Farm](#), the family home where the author spent the last 15 years of her life (from 1951 until 1964, when she died of lupus at age 39). Opened in 2023, the farm's [Andalusia Interpreting Center](#) is home to an array of O'Connor's personal and professional belongings (like a [beaded dress covered in chicken prints](#)) on view to visitors, as well as a gift shop. It also hosts guided tours of the farm itself, which influenced many of the author's writings.

Milledgeville's [Merry Hill Cemetery](#) is the final resting place of O'Connor along with many of those associated with Georgia history, including several of the state's early governors and enslaved people. Dive even deeper into the town's past with a narrated tour aboard its bright-red [trolley](#), a.k.a. "Milly." Along with taking in the town's many Victorian, Greek Revival and Federal-style structures, this one-hour excursion includes stops at [Georgia's Old Capitol Building](#), the centerpiece of Milledgeville's Lumbery Arboretum, [Rose Hill](#) and the [Sallie Ellis Davis House](#), former home to Sallie Davis, who educated hundreds of African American children during a time of racial segregation. Or take a guided tour of the opulent [Georgia's Old Governor's Mansion](#), which served as the residence for eight of Georgia's chief executives and their families. Like many of Milledgeville's historic structures, it's now part of [Georgia College and State University](#)—O'Connor's alma mater.

For a bit of the outdoors, Lake Sinclair is a 15,300-acre haven for hiking, biking, fishing and water sports. Rent everything from jet skis to stand-up paddleboards at the onsite [Sinclair Wild Watersports](#), then fill up on modern Southern delicacies at the lakeside [Alder Lane](#). For ribeye, oysters and shrimp tacos, try [Taylor's Cove](#), another waterfront spot with live music on the weekends.