



## **Atlanta History**

### *From Railroad Hub to International City*

Like its symbol, the legendary phoenix of Egyptian mythology, Atlanta rose from the ashes following its destruction during the Civil War to become the mecca of the new South and an exciting international city.

The first residents of Georgia were prehistoric American Indians called Mound Builders. The Cherokee Indians, who settled north and west of the Chattahoochee River, and the Creek, who populated the area south and east of the Chattahoochee, followed them. The state was named after Great Britain's King George II and was the last of the 13 original U.S. colonies.

Atlanta began taking substantive shape in 1837 when the Western & Atlantic Railroad selected the site as the southern end of its tracks. The town was called Terminus until 1843 when it was renamed Marthasville after the daughter of Gov. Wilson Lumpkin. In 1847, the city was renamed Atlanta, supposedly a feminine form of "Atlantic," probably created by an engineer with the Western & Atlantic. The city was incorporated in 1847.

By the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Atlanta was a major railroad hub, manufacturing center and supply depot. But, in 1864, in order to cripple transportation between the South and the North, Union General William T. Sherman's army burned all of the railroad facilities, almost every business and more than two-thirds of the city's homes to the ground during his infamous March to the Sea. Atlanta lay in ruins, the only major American city ever destroyed by war.

Atlanta's first resurgence began soon after. Within four years of Sherman's attack, the Georgia capital was moved from Milledgeville to Atlanta and a drive to attract new business was underway. One man, newspaper editor Henry W. Grady, earned much of the credit for coaxing the "brave and beautiful city," as he called it, toward a new economic agenda in a new, reconciled South.

In the meantime, colleges and universities began to open, telephones were introduced and trolleys began to roll. In 1895, the Cotton States and International Exposition in Piedmont Park showed 800,000 visitors and residents that Atlanta was headed in a new direction and braced for the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the late 1920s, a downtown business sector, ringed by residential districts, had taken shape giving Atlanta much of the distinct pattern it maintains today. At the same time,

Atlanta Alderman (and later Mayor) William B. Hartsfield campaigned to convince the city to turn a vacant racetrack into an airport. His success was magnified by the efforts of former Mayor Maynard Jackson, who led the modernization of the airport in the 1970s. In 2004, the airport was renamed Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in honor of Hartsfield and Jackson.

Today, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is one of the world's busiest airports, with more than 80 million annual passengers, and feeds heavily the city's vital service businesses, especially the convention and visitors market.

While the city continued its economic surge, it also became known as the "City Too Busy to Hate." Atlanta and Georgia pre-empted much of the strife associated with the 1950s and '60s by taking the lead in the Southeast in strengthening minority rights. The city's strongest identification with the movement was through its native son, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., but many others played key roles. In 1963, Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. was the only Southern mayor to testify before Congress in support of the pending Civil Rights Bill. When Dr. King was assassinated in 1968, Mayor Allen pleaded for calm. His request was met with anguished, but peaceful, mourning throughout the city.

In 1965, the city built Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium despite the fact that it had not signed any teams to play there. In short order, however, Major League Baseball moved the Braves to Atlanta from Milwaukee and the National Football League awarded the city the Falcons expansion team. Hank Aaron's historic 715<sup>th</sup> home run occurred at the stadium in April 1974, surpassing Babe Ruth's previous career home run record of 714. Aaron went on to hit a total of 755 career home runs before retiring and still holds the record today.

Much has been accomplished in the last 25 years to elevate Atlanta to world-class status. An efficient public transportation system – the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), was put in place; Underground Atlanta was added to the entertainment map; the Georgia World Congress Center made the city a convention hub; new hotels continue to open throughout the city, while established properties are constantly growing and renovating; the Georgia Dome was built in 1992; Philips Arena was built in 1999; the Georgia Aquarium (the world's largest) opened in 2005; and, following its 2005 expansion, the High Museum of Art began a three-year partnership with the Musée du Louvre in 2006.

And decision-makers have taken notice. Atlanta hosted the 1988 Democratic National Convention, Super Bowl XXVIII in 1994, Super Bowl XXXIV in 2000, the 2002 and 2007 NCAA Men's Final Four Basketball Championships and the 2008 NHL All-Star Game.

From July 20 through August 4, 1996, the eyes of the world were on Atlanta as the city welcomed the world to the Centennial Olympic Games. The city successfully hosted the world's largest Olympic Games, showcasing itself to 2 million people in person and through global broadcast to 3.5 billion people – more than two-thirds of the world's

population – thus sharing Atlanta’s vision. In 2005, the Atlanta History Center opened its Centennial Olympic Games Museum, offering an exploration of the history of the Games and Atlanta’s Olympic legacy – how the Games came to take place here and changed the city.

The Olympics served as a catalyst for a second resurgence of Atlanta as it continues to experience a dramatic transformation from great American city to greater international city, fueled by more than \$2 billion in new construction projects and other changes. New development, new attractions, renovated hotels expansion at the airport, premier art exhibitions, renowned architecture and citywide efforts have heightened Atlanta’s reputation as a world-class city.

Established in 1913, the ACVB is a private, nonprofit organization created exclusively to market metro Atlanta and Georgia as premier conventions, meetings and leisure destinations in the regional, national and international marketplace and to favorably impact the Atlanta economy through conventions and tourism.

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## **Atlanta History Timeline**

Atlanta has grown from a small railroad town in the 1830s to a thriving metropolis that hosted the world during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. The following timeline will take you from 1814 to the present.

- 1814            The U.S. military outpost Fort Gilmer was established as Standing Peachtree, an Indian village situated where Peachtree Creek flows into the Chattahoochee River.
  
- 1821            Permanent settlers began moving into former Creek Indian lands that would eventually become metropolitan Atlanta.
  
- 1837            The area now comprising the city was chosen as the site for a new railroad terminus connecting Georgia with Chattanooga, TN and points west, including the Chattahoochee and Tennessee Rivers. The city was dubbed “Terminus,” and the termination point is now Five Points in downtown Atlanta.
  
- 1843            “Terminus” was renamed “Marthasville” in honor of Martha Lumpkin, daughter of Georgia Gov. Wilson Lumpkin. The town spread out around the train depot.

- 1845 “Marthasville” was renamed “Atlanta,” a feminine form of Atlantic, probably created by Steven Harriman Long, a Western & Atlantic Railroad engineer.
- 1847 Atlanta was incorporated as a city.
- 1853 Atlanta was designated the county seat of the newly-created Fulton County, organized from portions of DeKalb County. A building, housing both City Hall and the Fulton County Courthouse, was erected where the capitol now stands.
- 1856 The Atlanta Gas Light Company became the city’s first corporation.
- 1857 Atlanta was first dubbed the “Gate City of the South” for its increasing importance as a rail center.
- 1861 The Civil War began. Atlanta was considered the transportation hub of the Southeast.
- 1864 During the Civil War, Union General William T. Sherman burned Atlanta to the ground (about 70 percent of its buildings were destroyed) on his infamous March to the Sea. The war ended the next year.
- 1867 M. Rich and Co., the forerunner to Rich’s department store, opened; Atlanta University was chartered; and Summer Hill School, the predecessor to Clark Atlanta University, opened.
- 1868 Atlanta replaced Milledgeville as Georgia’s capital. *The Atlanta Constitution* was founded.
- 1871 The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce was organized.
- 1877 Telephone service was introduced in Atlanta.
- 1879 Atlanta Baptist Seminary, the predecessor to Morehouse College, moved to Atlanta from Augusta, Ga.
- 1883 *The Atlanta Journal* was founded.
- 1886 Atlanta was chosen as the site of Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Henry Grady made his New South speech in New York City, calling for the North’s reconciliation with the South and for economic diversification and industrialization of the region.

A local drug store, Jacob's Pharmacy, began selling a new headache and hangover tonic called Coca-Cola. The tonic was invented by John S. Pemberton.

- 1889 Joel Hurt established Inman Park, the city's first planned suburb, and Atlanta's first electric trolley line, which ran to Inman Park.
- 1891 Entrepreneur Asa Candler paid \$2,300 to own Coca-Cola. The next year he founded The Coca-Cola Company.
- 1895 The Cotton States and International Exposition was held in Piedmont Park, focusing national and international attention on Atlanta.
- 1897 Built as the English-American Building, the Flatiron Building, Atlanta's first skyscraper, was completed
- 1898 The famed Cyclorama Civil War painting was acquired by the city and displayed in Grant Park.
- 1913 Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau was founded.
- 1914 A branch of the Federal Reserve Bank was established in Atlanta.
- 1917 The worst fire since Sherman's March to the Sea leaves 10,000 Atlantans homeless as it burns nearly 2,000 buildings covering 300 acres.
- 1919 Ernest Woodruff and the Trust Company of Georgia headed a syndicate that bought The Coca-Cola Company for \$25 million from the Candler family.
- 1922 Atlanta's first local radio stations, WSB and WGST, began broadcasting.
- 1925 The first Forward Atlanta Commission, chaired by Ivan Allen, Sr., was established to promote the city.
- 1926 William B. Hartsfield selected the site of Candler Field, south of the city, for the Atlanta airport.
- 1926-1928 The first Forward Atlanta campaign brought more than 600 new businesses to town.
- 1929 The city purchased Candler Field (now the site of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport), which was handling 16 passenger and airmail flights daily.

- 1930 Atlanta amateur golfer Bobby Jones won an unprecedented (and never duplicated) Grand Slam in golf: the British Open, the British Amateur, the U.S. Open and the U.S. Amateur – all in four months.
- Delta Air Lines initiated passenger service in Atlanta; six months later, Eastern Airlines began serving the city.
- 1935 Techwood Homes, dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, became the nation's first federal public housing project.
- 1936 Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" was published. Mitchell won the Pulitzer Prize for the novel the next year.
- 1938 Georgia's first four-lane superhighway, U.S. 41, was completed from Atlanta to Marietta.
- 1939 The movie "Gone With the Wind" made its world premiere in Atlanta.
- 1941 Delta Air Lines moved its headquarters to Atlanta from Monroe, La.
- 1946 119 people died in America's worst hotel fire at the Winecoff Hotel.
- 1948 Atlanta moved into the television age with the launch of the city's first television station, WSB-TV.
- 1952 Through its Plan of Improvement, the city of Atlanta incorporated surrounding areas, which increased the city's population from 330,000 to 430,000 and tripled the city's size from 37 square miles to 118 square miles.
- 1958 Temple of the Hebrew Benevolent Congregation was bombed by what were believed to be racial extremists. No one was ever convicted in the case.
- 1959 Lenox Square, the city's first regional shopping center, opened.
- Atlanta Constitution* Editor Ralph McGill won a Pulitzer Prize for his editorials on the Temple bombing.
- Atlanta Mayor William B. Hartsfield described Atlanta as the "city too busy to hate."
- 1960 Elbert Tuttle was appointed Chief Judge of the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. Under his leadership, the court sped up the desegregation process in Atlanta and throughout the region by rapidly overturning court orders used as delaying tactics.

- 1961 Ivan Allen, Jr. defeated segregationist Lester Maddox in the mayoral election, and Atlanta's public schools were peacefully desegregated.
- A modern terminal was completed at Hartsfield-Jackson Airport.
- The Forward Atlanta Campaign was conducted for the first time since 1928. Within 10 years, 240,000 jobs and 247 office buildings, 31 office parks, seven regional shopping centers and 353 warehouses were added to metro Atlanta.
- 1962 106 Atlanta Art Association members and relatives died in a plane crash at Orly Airport in Paris. Richard Rich led a \$13 million fundraising drive to build the Atlanta Memorial Arts Center, now the Woodruff Arts Center, in their memory.
- 1964 Martin Luther King, Jr. won the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1965 The \$18 million Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium was built in 364 days "on land we didn't own, with money we didn't have and for teams we had not signed," according to Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr. That same year, the Braves moved to Atlanta from Milwaukee, and the Atlanta Falcons became a new National Football League expansion team.
- 1968 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn. The funeral and burial were in Atlanta.
- 1969 The opening of Underground Atlanta put downtown Atlanta on the entertainment and social map.
- 1970 Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) purchased the Atlanta Transit System and began extending its routes, replacing its old buses and engineering a rapid rail system.
- 1973 Maynard Jackson was elected Atlanta's first black mayor.
- 1974 Atlanta Brave Hank Aaron hit his 715<sup>th</sup> home run, breaking Babe Ruth's long-held major-league home run record.
- 1975 R.E. "Ted" Turner's Turner Broadcasting System (TBS) went on the air.
- 1976 The State of Georgia opened the Georgia World Congress Center -- the second-largest convention center in the United States.
- 1980 R.E. "Ted" Turner's Cable News Network (CNN) went on the air.
- 1988 Atlanta hosted the Democratic National Convention.

- 1989 Following a \$142 million renovation, Underground Atlanta reopened in downtown Atlanta.
- 1990 The National Football League announced Atlanta as host city for Super Bowl XXVIII in 1994.
- In Tokyo, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) named Atlanta as host city for the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games.
- 1991 The Atlanta Braves move from worst to first by winning the National League pennant and playing in the World Series against the Minnesota Twins.
- 1992 The Georgia Dome, the largest cable-supported stadium in the world, opens.
- 1994 The Dallas Cowboys beat the Buffalo Bills 30-13 on January 30 in Super Bowl XXVIII, held in the Georgia Dome.
- 1995 The Atlanta Braves defeat Cleveland Indians to win the World Series.
- Olympic venue construction is finalized.
- 1996 The Centennial Olympic Games held July 20-August 4.
- 2000 Atlanta hosts Super Bowl XXXIV.
- 2002 Atlanta hosts NCAA Men's Final Four basketball championships.
- 2003 Atlanta hosts NCAA Women's Final Four basketball championships.
- The new Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) opens its doors.
- Imagine It! The Children's Museum of Atlanta opens adjacent to Centennial Olympic Park.
- 2004 Falcons win NFC Championship and head coach Jim Mora is named NFC Coach of the Year.
- The Phase IV expansion of the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) is completed.
- Airport is renamed Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in tribute to the late Atlanta mayors William B. Hartsfield and Maynard Jackson.

- 2005            Inside CNN Atlanta Studio Tour completes \$5.5 million in additions and upgrades.
- Atlantic Station opens.
- High Museum of Art opens expansion, doubling in size.
- Atlanta Braves win major professional sports record 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive division title.
- Georgia Aquarium opens.
- 2006            Atlanta History Center opens Centennial Olympic Games Museum.
- High Museum of Arts begins three-year partnership with Musée du Louvre.
- Atlanta becomes the 10<sup>th</sup> city in 10 years and first city in the Southeast to offer CityPass.
- 2007            Relocated and expanded World of Coca-Cola opens, adjacent to Centennial Olympic Park and the Georgia Aquarium.
- Atlanta hosts NCAA Men's Final Four basketball championships
- 2008            Atlanta hosts NHL All-Star Game.
- New Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) facility opens at Peachtree and 14<sup>th</sup> streets.

Historical information provided by the Atlanta History Center, (404) 814-4000. For information on future openings and landmarks to come, please request our *Development in Atlanta* press release.