



Poet Sidney Lanier was born in this Victorian cottage in Macon, Ga. in 1842. Among Lanier's best known poems are "The Marshes of Glynn" and "Song of the Chattahoochee." His native city, once known as a "river town," has hosted ancient Indian tribes, explorers, river traders, cotton kings and presidents. It is purely by design that Macon, with all of her beautiful parks and beauty spots, is known as a "City in a Park."

Macon In Deep South Varies Greatly From Sister City In Warren

The Warren County community of Macon has a sister city down in the Deep South—and what a big sister she is.

The city of Macon, Georgia, established in 1823, now covers 50 square miles. Its population exceeds 125,000.

The city has 316 full-time firemen and 260 police officers. It contains 206 manufacturing facilities and over 250 churches. A total of 919 acres of parkland can be found within the city, and more than 2,600 hotel and motel rooms are available.

But, of course, it wasn't always so.

Macon is located in the middle of the state on Georgia's Fall Line, where Paleozoic Sea waters lapped the shoreline here millions of years ago.

Macon is the county seat of Bibb County, and is located 84 miles from Atlanta.

Archeological excavations at the Ocmulgee National Monument at Macon indicate Indian settlements beginning about 8,000 B.C. On a hill near these historic settlements, Fort Hawkins was built in 1806. The block-house replica on the original site is the only reconstruction of an inland Georgia fort and trading post typical of those established for the protection of the settlers as civilization moved westward across the Southeast. General Andrew Jackson and other military leaders utilized the fort in the nation's early struggles.

Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto recorded the first Christian baptism on the new continent during his explorations in this area in 1540. His priests baptized two Indians in the Ocmulgee River near the Indian mounds at Ocmulgee National Monument.

Following Indian treaties in 1821, Macon was laid out and incorporated in 1823 on the west bank of the river on the plan of old Babylon, with wide streets and provisions for parks. This layout has been developed into one of America's most beautiful and best designed business districts.

Macon became the focal point of education and culture for Middle Georgia early in its history. Wesleyan College was established in 1836, the first college in the world chartered to grant degrees to women. Mercer University, established at Penfield, Georgia in 1833, moved to Macon in 1871.

Wealthy planters and businessmen in pre-Civil War days built elaborate mansions and neat cottages, many of which are preserved today as a part of Macon's heritage. Four of Macon's downtown churches were established more than 150 years ago.

Macon resisted two attacks by Union troops, but was occupied by the Federals in 1865. A Confederate depository was located in Macon. The state capitol was located in the city when Sherman's troops were threatening the capitol in nearby Milledgeville. Several foundries and munitions plants were located here.

Today Macon is a thriving, growing business center of the Southeast. Its people, its industries, its commerce are all on the move. History is being made here today but there is still much to remember of the past.

The city is a blend of rich history and an even richer future. It offers advantages of a growing city while maintaining friendly, quiet beauty. An enviable topography and a mild climate make this city a prime distribution, agricultural and industrial center of the South.

Some 200,000 tourists visit Macon each year to enjoy Macon's natural charm and well preserved heritage. In the spring visitors are invited to a grand celebration, the Macon, Georgia Cherry Blossom Festival, an annual ten-day parade of entertainment and over 100 special events. Begun in 1983, the festival celebrates the blossoming of Macon's famous 70,000 Yoshino cherry trees.



Old-timers will recall that J. H. Gilliland's Macon Grocery Company occupied the single-story building in foreground on Macon's main thoroughfare which was paved in 1927 and now carries U.S. Highway 158 designation. The frame two-story building beside the Gilliland building is the Coleman Brothers general merchandise store. The square building in the next block is the site of a service station which had an auto repair shop in the rear. It is the site of Macon's first store, that operated by B. I. Egerton. Egerton's son, William Gray Egerton, had his first store in a frame building on the opposite end of the block. In 1916 he built the large brick building which now houses Halthcock's Grocery. On this side of Halthcock's Grocery is Lobo's Lounge, which is in the building housing the Bank of Macon from 1910 until the bank closed in 1933. Next to the old bank building is the H. B. Harris building, built in 1922. It served as a grocery store and post office. At the far right in this photo is a large two-story building with living quarters in rear. It housed a general merchandise business operated by Henry Watson, the young town's only black merchant. Watson served as Macon postmaster from 1897

until 1901. West of that store was a store owned and operated by Julius (Pete) Olsen, an immigrant from Denmark who was befriended and given a farm job by Billy Brown. Later Olsen built a large frame store with living quarters. Before his death, in 1941, Olsen became blind and sold fish in the heart of downtown Macon. The Olsen property was purchased by Wilton Loyd who built a service station on a vacant area in 1946. Loyd operated the station until his death in 1962. The station now houses a repair business operated by Larry Kimball. W. G. Egerton's steam-powered cotton gin was across the road from the Olsen store. The gin stood between the main road and the railroad. Several feet east of the gin was a blacksmith shop, next to which stood a small jail. That is the present site of a Gulf service station operated last by Marvin Stegall. Up from there was a storage warehouse and beyond that stood the freight depot. A freight platform was located nearby. Another freight warehouse stood directly across from Coleman Brothers' Store.

(Staff Photo by Howard Jones)



This was the Macon Hotel, which was demolished about 1960. It was built by Walter Egerton, son of early merchant B. I. Egerton. The hotel stood on the north side of the railroad tracks, across Oak Street from the Macon Methodist Church. In the rear of the hotel was a livery stable. Salesmen would come to town on the train, rent a horse and buggy and make calls in surrounding communities.



Macon's municipal business is transacted in the mobile building which serves as a town hall. It is located in the shadow of the old Macon High School.

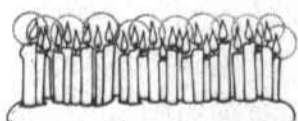
(Staff Photo by Howard Jones)

We would like to publicly commend the citizens of Macon for their contributions over the years to our company and to our county.

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