



Norcross History

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Named after the Honorable Jonathan Norcross, Norcross was chartered as a town on October 26, 1870. Selected to the National Register of Historic Places by the Department of the Interior in the early 1980's, its rich history began much earlier.

The Norcross Historic District sits along the eastern continental divide. This divide, or ridge, played a significant role in the early settlement of the area. Originally, the Creek and Cherokee Indians occupied this land and the ridgeline was used as a major transportation route. Two American forts were established in the early 1800's due to the War of 1812 – Fort Daniel (at Hog Mountain) and Peachtree Fort (in Atlanta). These two forts were connected by this old Indian trail which became known as the original Peachtree Road. By around 1840, this trail had evolved into a stagecoach route connecting South Carolina and Alabama through Georgia. The surrounding area became populated and the small communities of Pinckneyville and Flint Hill prospered.

This all changed with the creation of the Richmond-Danville Railroad, designed to open up the wilderness areas of northeast Georgia. The railroad was proposed in 1856 by Jonathan Norcross (a former Atlanta mayor) and was subsequently approved. Construction was delayed, however, until 1866 because of the Civil War. On September 12, 1869, the first twenty miles were completed and on October 16, 1869, John J. Thrasher bought the 250 acres surrounding the terminal for \$1,650 and a town was born – named for Thrasher's good friend, Jonathan Norcross. Thrasher and Norcross had been business associates and pioneer founders of the City of Atlanta. Indeed, upon Jonathan Norcross's death in 1898, The Atlanta Constitution featured his picture on the front page proclaiming him the "Father of Atlanta" and Atlanta's "most historic citizen".

The Brunswick Hotel was built in 1870 and Norcross quickly became known as a resort area for Atlantans wanting to escape the rapidly growing city. The new town also meant the demise of the surrounding communities of Pinckneyville and Flint Hill, as people migrated in to build houses, churches, schools, and to be near the railroad.

Gwinnett County's second oldest city, Norcross saw new roads and highways which were later built by-pass the city, preserving its historic center as a nineteenth century railroad town. Everyone who visits the city recognizes its charm and small town feel. The city is again on the upswing as new restaurants and shops move into the downtown area and a new generation of homeowners, business owners, and citizens enter the community and embrace its charm.