

THE IMPACT OF THE RAILROAD IN COBB COUNTY



Before the 1830s, the main means of public long distance travel in Georgia was river navigation and the stagecoach. But economics, specifically the cotton industry, demanded a means of transporting raw materials to mills, factories and to the coastal cities for exportation to foreign markets. The answer was railroads.

Railroad tracks began to be laid in Marietta in 1842. Twenty-nine miles of track had been laid by the end of the year and had a tremendous impact on Marietta. The railroad marked the beginning of the end of the frontier village named Marietta. Railroads meant more businesses and industrialization, and before long, the quiet village had become a bustling town.

The Western and Atlantic Railroad was the main railroad that ran through Marietta. The railroad brought more people into Marietta and the town's population began to grow. Marietta became an important link between Atlanta and Chattanooga.

The first trip on the railroad occurred on Christmas Eve, 1842. The railroad did not progress as hoped. By 1844, the tracks had to be replaced because the wood was rotting. After the tracks were laid down once more, the first ride was taken on September 15, 1845. The railroad tracks were completed throughout Cobb County the next year and more people began to ride the trains.

On May 5, 1850, the first trip from Atlanta to Chattanooga was completed. The completion of the line meant that Marietta would be a stop along the line and attract more people. The population of Marietta continued to grow with the help of the trains. Many stores were established because Marietta was becoming such an important place for trade. The first merchant in Marietta was John Lemon.

Along with shops springing up in the town, there were hotels for visitors who wanted to spend the night. One of them was the Fletcher House which opened its doors in 1855. After the Civil War, the Fletcher House was renamed the Kennesaw House, and today it is the home of the Marietta Museum of History.

After the war the railroads helped to bring more people to Marietta, especially during the winter when Marietta became a popular resort town.

Although the railroad is no longer the favored way for people to travel, the railroad is still important to Marietta. The train tracks just outside of the Kennesaw House bring many trains through Marietta every day.