



# HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## A Foundation for the Future

The Savannah River, first a commercial transportation corridor, was the reason that human settlement and occupation originally occurred in the area that is now North Augusta. Three early communities, located in the general area of North Augusta, preceded the development of North Augusta itself. The first was Savannah Town settled by the English in the early 1700's. Savannah Town was located below the Fifth Street Bridge and was one of the most important Indian trading centers in South Carolina. At the time, it was considered the end of the civilized world and the gateway to the relatively unknown lands of the Indian Nations as far west as the Mississippi River. Fur traders shipped their goods from Savannah Town to Charles Town (Charleston, SC) via the Savannah River where they were then shipped to England. The town failed after only 50 years when enterprising merchants set up trading posts on the Georgia side of the river to intercept the goods from the west before they reached Savannah Town.

Campbell Town, founded by John Hammond in the mid 1700's, was the second town settled in the area. It was situated on the Savannah River just below the rapids and was also established as a trading center for furs, other goods, and tobacco. Campbell Town prospered for about 60 years before the lucrative tobacco market started to slip to the Georgia side of the river due to increasing competition between tobacco warehouse owners. In fact, the General Assembly of Georgia, seated in Augusta, took legal steps to establish Augusta as a tobacco center. Competition between tobacco growers and warehouse owners grew so intense that riverboat ferries were destroyed, John Hammond was killed, and his house was burned. With the tobacco and fur trade bypassing Campbell Town, the town did not survive.

The third town, Hamburg, was founded by Henry Schultz in 1821 and incorporated in 1827. It was located near the Fifth Street bridge and ruins of the old town still remain. It was the home dock of a thriving steamboat business between Hamburg and Charleston and in only five years grew into a flourishing town. The downriver tobacco and cotton trade was so robust that Charleston merchants financed and built a railroad from Charleston to Hamburg. The 136-mile Charleston-Hamburg Railroad, when completed in 1833, was the longest passenger steam railroad in the world. Soon Augusta businessmen started devising ways to take business away from Hamburg. The Augusta Canal was built to allow up-country planters to use the river and pass above the rapids into Augusta. The final death to Hamburg came when the State of Georgia granted permission for the railroad to extend across the Savannah River into Georgia, changing Hamburg from a terminal point to just a stop along the way to Augusta. After about 50 years, Hamburg, like its predecessors, perished.

North Augusta formed after the demise of Hamburg in the late 1800s. As a boy, Augusta native James Urquhart Jackson envisioned a town overlooking Augusta in the rolling bluffs across the Savannah River. Jackson pursued that dream and in 1889 formed the North Augusta Land Company. In 1890, the company purchased 5,600 acres of land for \$100,000 from the

plantation acreage of Mrs. Mattie Butler Mealing. Jackson then hired “the best designers from New York” to plan the new town. The original plat of North Augusta, the Boeckh Plat, was drawn in 1891 by Charles Boeckh. The plat includes a traditional downtown, formal public park areas, undeveloped open space areas, and a traditional lot, block and street layout.

The same year, Jackson built a steel bridge across the Savannah River. The bridge connected Augusta’s 13th Street with North Augusta’s Georgia Avenue and provided direct access from Augusta to North Augusta. The bridge was later dedicated the James U. Jackson Memorial Bridge. In 1897, to further facilitate transportation across the river, the North Augusta Land Company constructed a trolley line across the bridge. The trolley initially extended to the former North Augusta Natatorium, an elaborate and popular swimming pool located between Crystal Lake Drive and Bluff Avenue. Progress followed the trolley as it extended up West Avenue to Jackson Avenue. The trolley was eventually extended to Aiken and the Augusta-Aiken Railway Company was formed. The trolley ceased operation in 1929.

Following the success of the bridge and the trolley line, Jackson formed the North Augusta Hotel Company. In 1902 the company broke ground on the Hampton Terrace Hotel, located high on the hilltop overlooking Augusta. Completed in 1903 at a cost of \$536,000, the Hampton Terrace boasted five floors and 300 guest rooms fitted with every convenience available at the time including a golf course, tennis courts, and a riding stable. The Hampton Terrace soon established North Augusta as a popular winter resort destination and attracted such prominent northerners as Harvey Firestone, John D. Rockefeller and then Vice-President Howard Taft.

As the town grew, so did the need for law and order. In 1903, with a population estimated at several hundred, a petition requesting a charter was sent to the governor of South Carolina. On April 11, 1906, the town of North Augusta was incorporated. The first meeting of the Town Council was held April 16, 1906 and was presided over by the town’s first Intendant (Mayor), L.L. Arrington, and four Wardens (Councilmen). By 1913 the population had grown to 1500. On December 31, 1916, the Hampton Terrace Hotel burned to the ground. It was a total and devastating loss and served to end North Augusta’s prominence as a winter tourist destination.

The original land area of the city was approximately 722 acres. In 1951, the city held a referendum and extended its boundaries to a total of 5,139 acres. Since 1951, the city has annexed over 6,000 additional acres, bringing the total land area to approximately 13,452 acres or 21 square miles. The best part of the past remains in North Augusta today, blended with a modern outlook to create a unique community that has pride in its commitment to be independent and self-reliant with a deep sense of togetherness and achievement.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Historic Buildings

There are a number of historic buildings remaining in the city that represent North Augusta’s rich history, many of which are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and should be preserved. The majority of these are located within the original 1891 Boeckh Plat, mostly

concentrated on Georgia Avenue, Carolina Avenue, West Avenue, and Martintown Road. They include large, stately homes in Victorian and vernacular styles from the early 20th century. Because of their location on primary routes for traffic, many historic buildings have been lost to new commercial buildings or parking lots, or have been drastically altered to accommodate zoning laws. Below is a list of historic buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Charles Hammond House
- Lookaway Hall
- Britton Mims Place
- Rosemary Hall
- B.C. Wall House

### **Historic Districts**

The Georgia Avenue-Butler Avenue Historic District is a National Register Historic District. The district encompasses part of the property which was the site of the former Hampton Terrace Hotel and contains several buildings which were associated with it, as well as other large residences. The four buildings of architectural importance and 12 supporting properties were built between 1900 and 1930 and illustrate the antebellum growth of the city as a winter resort.

Several of the structures along Georgia Avenue remain substantially intact and may be eligible for historic designation. One of the key properties, Star of Edgefield, (c.1859), is one of the oldest houses in North Augusta. It was once part of an extensive plantation owned by Robert J. Butler. Butler sold 5,600 acres of this property to James U. Jackson's North Augusta Land Company in 1890. Several houses were constructed on lots which had been part of the Butler plantation including Palmetto Lodge, a hunting lodge (c.1903), and Pine Heights, a sanitarium (c.1899), both built for guests of the Hampton Terrace Hotel. The district also contains an unusually fine collection of intact early twentieth century residential styles including Queen Anne, Classical Revival and Tudor Revival.

In 2021, the Carrsville neighborhood was designated as an African American Heritage District. This African American neighborhood was established in 1930 after flooding displaced many residents of Hamburg in 1929. The origin of the neighborhood's name is uncertain. However, it is likely named after Charles W. Carr of the American Red Cross, or for William Carpenter, an African American businessman who donated several parcels of land to help victims of the Hamburg flooding. This neighborhood also features a historic building known as the Society Building, which was built in 1930 for the Young Men's Union Society.

### **Religious Institutions**

Twenty (20) churches representing an extensive list of denominations are located in and around the North Augusta city limits. Some of which are historic, while others add to neighborhood amenities and culture, especially Downtown.

- North Augusta Church
- First Baptist Church of North Augusta
- TrueNorth Church
- North Augusta Bible Chapel
- Grace United Methodist Church
- North Augusta Baptist Church
- Victory Baptist Church
- Grace Fellowship Church
- North Augusta Southern Methodist
- Riverfront Church
- Second Providence Baptist Church
- Immanuel Baptist Church
- Saint Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church
- Spring Grove Baptist Church
- Fairview Presbyterian Church
- Woodridge Baptist Church
- Belvedere United Methodist Church
- Church of the Holy Trinity
- Christ Church of North Augusta
- Ridgeview Baptist Church

**CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**Cultural and Tourist Attractions and Facilities**

Several nonprofit community organizations in North Augusta have developed cultural activities for citizens and tourists interested in learning more about the history and culture of the region. These organizations include the Cultural Arts Council, Olde Town Preservation Association, Heritage Council, and North Augusta Forward. In addition to parks throughout the city, the South Carolina Heritage Corridor travels through North Augusta. The 240 miles and fourteen counties that comprise the nationally recognized South Carolina Heritage Corridor are divided into four distinct regions and two routes that stretch from the port city of Charleston in the southern part of the state to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Oconee County in the north. Designated as a national heritage area, the Corridor is viewed as an economic development initiative attracting an estimated 700,000 visitors per year.

The Corridor travels through North Augusta along its Discovery Route, following the trail of the Charleston-Hamburg Railroad, the nation’s first and then longest railroad which stretched from Charleston to North Augusta (then Hamburg, South Carolina). The railroad led to the development of many small market towns along the way. From North Augusta, the corridor travels west and north through mill towns that thrived on power generated from water as it meandered down from the Blue Ridge Mountains in the north.

**Community Festivals**

The City of North Augusta benefits from a variety of cultural and historic events and festivals throughout the year, which are sponsored by numerous community organizations, businesses, the City of North Augusta, and its neighbors and citizens. Annual events in the City include:

- A Day to Remember – Colonial Times
- Jack-O-Lantern Jubilee
- Under the Crown and Colonial Trades Fair
- Lions Club Christmas Parade

- Annual Christmas Tree Lighting
- Music in the Park
- SpringFest
- Easter Egg Hunt

### **North Augusta Cultural Arts Council**

The North Augusta Cultural Arts Council, founded in 1996, is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is the support of existing arts and the development of new arts programs for the citizens of North Augusta. The Arts Council is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and is funded by the City of North Augusta and various grants and donations. Regular program activities include “Music in the Park,” a series of free concerts throughout the summer at Maude Edenfield Park. Other activities have included: an annual student talent show, a citywide competitive student art show, artists’ banner program, theater productions, Veterans Concert and Prism Concert.

In 2003, to provide the community with an indoor facility for the performing arts, the Arts Council solicited funding and, with the approval of the Aiken County Board of Education, completed extensive renovations to the North Augusta High School Auditorium. The \$120,000 in improvements funded primarily by North Augusta Forward included new stage dressings and professional light and sound equipment.

### **North Augusta Arts Heritage Center**

With the opening of the Municipal Center, The Cultural Arts Council and the Heritage Council jointly erected the North Augusta Arts and Heritage Center to manage 7,500 square feet of space within the center celebrating the community’s heritage and showcasing local artists.

### **Olde Town Preservation Association**

The North Augusta Olde Towne Preservation Association was founded in 1991 to preserve the unique historic character of North Augusta. The Preservation Association hosts “A Day to Remember,” a two-day colonial trades fair and militia muster at the Creighton Living History Park. The Preservation Association also hosts a spring Artisans Fair, shares historic topics and activities with local school children, and participates in numerous community and regional events.

## GOALS & STRATEGIES

### 8.1

#### **EXPAND THE ARTS & OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES:**

Expand creative arts, cultural events, and resources offered in public space and City programs that support them.

##### **8.1.1. Introduce public art into neighborhoods, public open space, parks, the Greenway, and Downtown.**

Introduce various forms of public art throughout the City, such as sculptures, memorials, murals, installations, and other arts programs.

##### **8.1.2. Promote local artists.**

The North Augusta Artists Guild will continue to identify and work to promote local artists. Partnering with local artists to create public art, or exhibit their work in community centers, City Hall, and Downtown businesses will identify the City as a place that is friendly to the arts.

##### **8.1.3. Require a public art element in all municipal projects.**

Promoting art in North Augusta will help make the City more aesthetic and attract individuals throughout the CSRA. Requiring public art or some cultural element in all municipal projects will ensure that the City is making cultural and aesthetic improvements, which may be beneficial to the City and community.

##### **8.1.4. Connect places of cultural significance to public open spaces through multi-modal and Greenway facilities.**

Identify existing and future locations of places of cultural significance and connect them through the Greenway facilities and other public spaces. Enhancing sidewalks and trails with furniture, lighting, seating, and other design elements will help enhance Downtown and the Greenway facilities.

##### **8.1.5. Existing community events and programs should be supported and expanded when possible.**

Existing events and programs should be supported and expanded by the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism. The City should promote these new programs throughout the community. Ensuring that programs are offered for the entire population of citizens, including children, young adults, families, and seniors will help cultivate healthy and active residents. One resource to consider for cultural events is the South Carolina Heritage Corridor, which runs through North Augusta with a few sites located in the city including: The Arts and Heritage Center, Rosemary B&B, Lookaway

Inn, and The Living History Park. All of these sites tie together the rich history, cultural influence, and historical sites of North Augusta.

## 8.2

### **PROTECT AND RESTORE HISTORIC RESOURCES IMPORTANT TO NORTH AUGUSTA'S IDENTITY:**

Identify historical resources and develop a maintenance and renovation program and funding to ensure their protection.

#### **8.2.1. Identify historic resources important to North Augusta's identity and ensure their protection with funding for maintenance.**

In addition to the Georgia - Butler Avenue Historic District and additional buildings listed on the National Historic Register, identify other important structures, parks, open spaces, natural features, fences, walls, cemeteries and viewsheds that contribute to the identity of North Augusta. These should be listed, prioritized, and funding should be allocated to ensure their maintenance and preservation. Funding can include grants, historic tax credits, and/or City monies.

#### **8.2.2. Work with the owners of Lookaway Hall and Rosemary Hall to ensure their preservation and maintenance.**

Lookaway Hall and Rosemary Hall are both very important to the historic identity of North Augusta. As physical reminders of the City's founding on their prominent location on a hill overlooking Downtown, it is imperative that they remain icons of North Augusta's identity. Creating a "Friends of Lookaway Hall" group to organize fundraising efforts, or identifying grants and historic tax credits can assist in the buildings' maintenance.

#### **8.2.3. Protect historic neighborhoods adjacent to downtown through the preservation of the street network, paving materials, and open space, as well as, promoting context sensitive infill development and the preservation of existing housing.**

The enhancement of the existing street network and the condition of roads, sidewalks, and open space can help ensure the preservation the historic character of neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. Promoting context sensitive development consistent with this character will help protect the unique identity of North Augusta.

#### **8.2.4. Identify and designate historic areas in the City.**

The City should work to identify and preserve areas of historical significance. Buildings in these areas should be reviewed before they can be modified or demolished to maintain the historic character of the area.