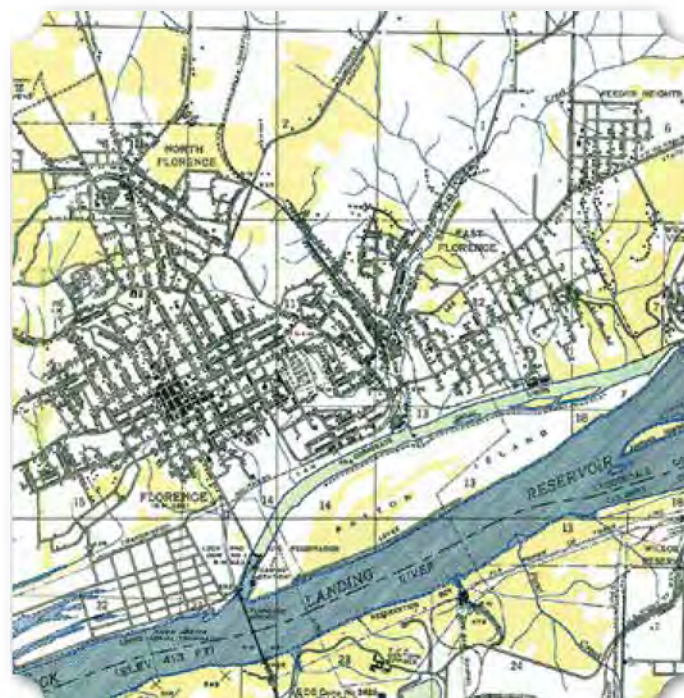


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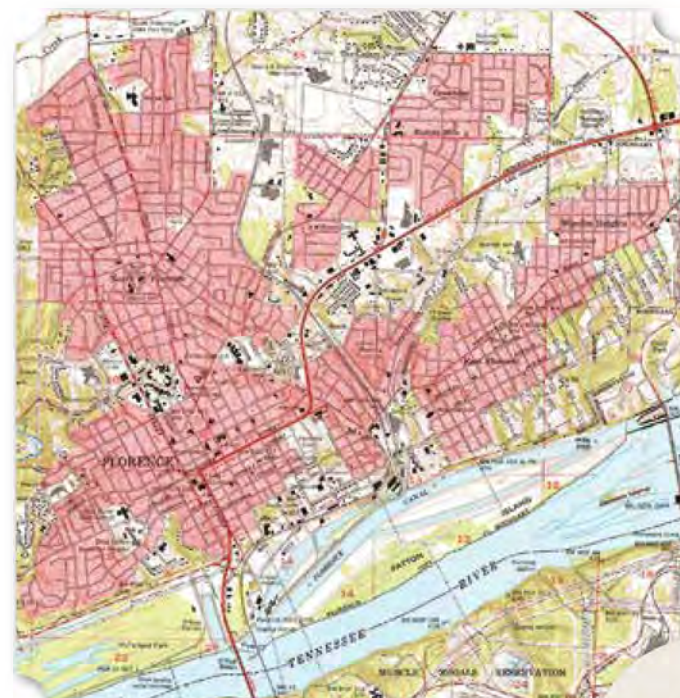
Florence

The City of Florence was platted by the Cypress Land Company in 1818 and named for the surveyor's hometown in Italy. The city's design is sometimes attributed to General John Coffee, one of the founding fathers and trustee of the land company. During planning, blocks were reserved for a courthouse, hotel, college, cotton factory, livery stables, ferry, cemetery, park, and churches. Florence was to be the seat of Lauderdale County, and it was first fueled by agriculture, like much of the region. Its location along the Tennessee River gave it access to the main mode of transport in the early 19th century. Though the city did well, it did not get very large. During the Civil War, Florence and several surrounding plantations were occupied by both Union and Confederate forces, including a manor house that is now known as Rogers Hall. Originally called Courtview, it was constructed in 1855 by George Washington Foster and overlooked Court Street. It is now part

(Below) 1936 USGS Topographic Map of Florence, Florence, Alabama Quadrangle



(Above) 1957 USGS Topographic Map of Florence, Florence, Alabama Quadrangle **(Below)** 1971 USGS Topographic Map of Florence, Florence, Alabama Quadrangle



KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS

(Right) A Hand-Colored Postcard of Courtview (Florence-Lauderdale Public Library, Courtesy Robert Whitten) **(Below)** Early Plat Map of Florence, Potentially Drawn by General Coffee (Florence-Lauderdale Public Library)



of the University of North Alabama. Sweetwater Plantation, in east Florence and Gen. John Coffee's Hickory Hill Plantation in north Florence were also occupied by both armies. Other plantations around Florence that were negatively impacted by the war include Ardoyne, Forks of Cypress, and Armistead's plantation.

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, an industrial and population boom in the late 1880s put Florence on the rise. Downtown Florence began to collect businesses and professional services, many of which were owned and run by African Americans. Restaurants, stores, shoe and bootmakers, livery stables, and blacksmiths were packed along Court Street. Most of downtown Florence was built at the turn of the 20th century between 1880 and 1920. Downtown has not seen much change since then, granting the area a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

One of the biggest companies to come to Florence in the late 19th century was Florence Wagon Works. In 1889, the factory moved from Atlanta to Florence and opened a large site on the river, east of downtown. It quickly became a large and important employer in town. While most of the workers were