

## CITIES

### Boom Town

Peachtree Street was never before like this. Handsome stone-and-glass office and apartment buildings are sprouting all over Atlanta. In the past two years workmen put the finishing touches on such major new downtown structures as a 22-story, \$12 million Atlanta Merchandise Mart, and a 31-story headquarters for the Bank of Georgia, loftiest skyscraper in the Southeast. This year city officials expect to issue around \$120 million worth of new building permits. From 1950 to 1960 metropolitan Atlanta's population jumped 40% to 1,017,188 and is still growing at the rate of 30,000 a year. The gracious belle of the old South has become the nation's newest boom town and managed to turn the trick without losing her poise or showing an ankle.

**No Playboys.** "There's a sustained drive here that retains a sense of values," says Editor Eugene Patterson of the *Atlanta Constitution*. "It's not the Houston go-go; the drive is here but the brashness is not." Much of Atlanta's stability under change comes from its business leaders, such as Robert Woodruff, Coca-Cola's retired chairman, and Richard Rich of Rich's, the South's largest department store, who have long made no-nonsense civic enterprise an Atlanta tradition. "This is not a playboy's town and it's not a cocktail-at-lunch town," says Mayor Ivan Allen Jr., himself the former president of the South's largest office-supply firm. "This is a businessman's town."

It is also a town that honors its traditions without becoming mired in them. "The besetting sin of the South is worship of the South," says William Hartsfield, mayor of Atlanta from 1937 through 1961. "Strangely, many people in the South today worship the day that Marga-

ret Mitchell said was gone with the wind. I say 'strangely' because few of them participated in those days. So many speak of magnolias and beautiful ladies and soft nights, and so many of them had only hookworm and poverty. We in Atlanta have been moving and getting somewhere over the years."

Forgetting the past, Atlanta has welcomed the influx of Northern business and blood that have given the city a cosmopolitan air and outlook. No major Southern city has managed to integrate its Negroes so well and so smoothly. Not a single ugly incident marred the integration of schools last year. Shrugs Mayor Allen: "Hell, the law was on the books, and it was here and we got it done, that's all."

**Sitting Pretty.** Geography has also been kind to Atlanta. Because it is 1,050 ft. above sea level—next to Denver the highest big city in the U.S.—Atlanta escapes the enervating Southern heat, has an average August temperature of only 75°. And Atlanta, with a new \$20 million jet airport and 13 railroad lines, has the good fortune to sit in the middle of the southeastern region of the U.S. that is swiftly becoming industrialized.

Atlanta is still recovering from the June jetliner crash in France that killed 105 of its citizens, including many of the city's cultural leaders. The city recently suffered a setback of another kind when voters turned down an \$80 million bond issue to finance a wide variety of home county improvements, including an elaborate cultural center. Last week the leaders were blaming the defeat only on themselves. Said Editor Patterson: "It was overconfidence. We had succeeded for so long I thought we couldn't fail. Therefore we didn't spell it out to the voters the way we should have. Next time we'll do it right." On the basis of past performances, there seems every chance that they will.

# TIME

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Talks About

Our ATLANTA



DOWNTOWN ATLANTA  
No go-go but plenty of drive.

LEVITON—ATLANTA

ATLANTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE