Florence, South Carolina, was originally developed in 1871 as a railroad terminal at the juncture of three rail lines. The proposed crossing site was named Florence in honor of Florence Harllee, daughter of the president of the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad W.W. Harllee.

The Florence County Museum’s diverse collections include the works of native-born artist William H. Johnson; ethnographic works and objects from various world cultures; history of the Pee Dee area of South Carolina before the time of European exploration; objects from South Carolina’s Antebellum through Reconstruction periods; Asian objects; Pueblo objects ranging from prehistoric Anasazi wares to works created in recent years; American Civil War artifacts and art, objects, documents, and photographs from both World War I and II.

The War Between The States Museum contains artifacts and memorabilia from 1850 to 1900, including weapons, camp items, relics recovered from several battlefields, photos of military personalities, and many items from the Florence Stockade (Union prison camp).

Other attractions in Florence include the ScienceSouth Pavilion, which offers hands-on science education; the Florence Railroad Museum, which is housed in a restored railroad boxcar and features exhibits and artifacts related to the history of the railroad in Florence; and the Art Trail Gallery, which is the home studio of sculptor Alex Palkovich and other local artists’ works.

Florence offers various opportunities for performing arts. The Florence Little Theatre produces an annual season of Broadway-type shows. Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center hosts Broadway musicals, concerts by the Florence Symphony and the Masterworks Choir, performances by the South Carolina Dance Theatre, and university musical and theatrical productions. The Florence Civic Center hosts entertainment by national acts of touring performers, family programs, and sporting events. The Art Trail Gallery offers monthly chamber music concerts.

The South Carolina Pecan Festival is an annual event held in November that includes live entertainment, art demonstrations, amusement rides, tractor and car shows, and other events.

**Neighborhoods**

Downtown Florence is primarily commercial; however, plans are underway for the development of apartments.

Most of the homes in the historic Timrod Park neighborhood, one of Florence’s oldest neighborhoods, were built between 1910 and 1940 in the Craftsman bungalow style. Other architectural styles include Tudor Revival, Cottage, Mediterranean Revival, Colonial Revival, and American Foursquare.

The Forest Hills neighborhood features traditional two-story and ranch-style homes on large-tree-lined lots. Most of the homes were built in the 1950s, and many streets in the neighborhood are divided by tree-lined grassy medians. Homes in Country Club Estates were built in the 1950s and 1960s, with many located alongside the Florence Country Club. Traditional two-story and ranch homes dominate this neighborhood.

Windsor Forest has traditionally styled homes built in the late 1970s and 1990s, as well as new homes under construction in 2015. The neighborhood features narrow, heavily tree-lined streets.

Homes in Quensferry were built in the 2000s in traditional styles. Forest Lake Shores was created in 2003 and consists of 62 lots, 15 of which front on the lake. The primarily brick homes in the development feature contemporary styling. The Reserve at Ebenezer is a new subdivision with homes in traditional and contemporary styles built in 2014 and 2015 on smaller lots.

**Parks and Recreation**

Florence has 13 parks with amenities that include playgrounds, softball fields, basketball goals, swimming pools, walking tracks, tennis courts, a skate park, competition horseshoe facility, and football fields. The city also has activity centers for youths, teens, and adults. Legion Stadium has a lighted regulation baseball field with seating for 2,500, a concession stand, and a press box.

Amenities at the Freedom Florence Recreational Complex include 9 lighted state-of-the-art tournament softball fields, 3 football fields, a gymnastics center, a 5-acre lake, an amphitheater, and walking/jogging trails. Veterans Park features monuments and memorials to World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the first Persian Gulf War. The park’s centerpiece is a large three-column obelisk with a bronzed American Bald Eagle on top. The park’s amphitheater is surrounded by commemorative flags.

McLeod Park is one of Florence’s largest parks and offers nature trails, 5 lighted baseball fields, concession stands, press boxes, 8 basketball goals, a skate park, competition horseshoe facility, and a pond.

Levy Park has a community center for seniors, a youth activity center, a playground, 8 basketball courts, 2 tennis courts, a lighted softball field, a baseball field, and a football field.

Myrtle Beach and the Darlington Raceway are nearby.

**Education**

Florence Public School District One educates approximately 16,300 students from Florence and all or part of several other communities, including Claussen, Effingham, Evergreen, Oakdale, Quinby, and Mars Bluff. The district has 13 elementary schools (grades K-6), 1 intermediate school (grades 5-6), 3 middle schools (grades 7-8), 3 traditional high schools and the Florence Career Center (grades 9-12). The district also offers programs for students who have experienced attendance, behavioral, and/or achievement problems.

Higher education is available at Francis Marion University, which is a state-supported liberal arts university with degree programs in business, arts and sciences, and education and is located six miles east of Florence. Florence–Darlington Technical College is a 2-year community college offering degrees, diplomas, and certificates on campus and online. McLeod School of Medical Technology trains college graduates or college seniors from an academic affiliate to become medical technologists.

**Health Care**

Florence is served by the McLeod Regional Medical Center (MRMC) with 453 licensed beds and Carolinas Hospital System, which is a 420-bed facility. Regency Hospital–Florence is a long-term acute care facility. HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Florence is an 88-bed rehabilitation hospital.

**City Stats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Population</td>
<td>37,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Statistical Area Population</td>
<td>206,261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Personal Income, Florence, SC, MSA</td>
<td>$34,646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photograph courtesy of Patricia Burkett, Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce.