

Morning news

by David W Brown on July 6, 2019. © All rights reserved

The Chattahoochee River has been flowing its four hundred and thirty miles since well before humans made the dangerous trek across the long-gone land bridge between continents. Those people came from a place we now call Asia, and some maybe came from a place we now call China. Maybe.

Maybe their descendants lived along the Chattahoochee, before it was even named that. Those people were eventually slaughtered or otherwise subjugated by people who also maybe slaughtered and subjugated their possible ancestors. Maybe.

Those folks who did the slaughtering and subjugating eventually got around to building things. Mighty industry, for one. They built that by subjugating people from another side of the world. No maybe there.

Industry and commerce led to wealth which led to building more things and they eventually built a big city with all that wealth at the headwaters of the Chattahoochee that they called 'Atlanta'.

First, they called it 'Terminus' and then 'Thrasherville', but maybe those didn't have a nice enough ring and so some smart fellow came up with Atlanta.

Atlanta grew to be a pretty populous and wealthy place over the years and it sat there like a stout King; looking down its nose along the Chattahoochee valley at all the puny towns that Alabama and Florida had cobbled together on the banks of the same river.

So, one morning in August 2020 when folks turned on the news and heard that Beijing was suddenly sitting there on the banks of the Chattahoochee, looking back at Atlanta like a Lion staring at an Antelope, well, they had to take notice. This wasn't at all like Phenix City or Eufaula, or hell, even Columbus.

This was serious. Setting aside questions of the physics involved in relocating a city of twenty-two million people across an ocean and most of another continent, there was the reality of competition.

Gosh, Atlanta had hosted an Olympic games and could lord that over all the cities in the Southeast!

Now, there's a city just down the river that's hosted a summer games too and was hosting a winter games in two years!

Well, that changed everything for the people of Atlanta and they couldn't ignore it even if they wanted to. All they had to do was look south and see the light in the evenings and the smog in the daytime.

And the noise! It went on twenty-four hours a day.

But the worst part was the traffic. Infrastructure in Atlanta, like most places in the country had been left for future generations to worry about. Overnight, the future was suddenly staring everyone square in the face. No maybe about that.

Once the people of Beijing adjusted to the new time zone, well, they were on the move. Cars, trucks, buses and even bicycles were soon overwhelming the highways and roads in, around and through Atlanta.

The mayor called an emergency council meeting specifically to deal with traffic after his voicemail filled up with messages from the angry CEOs of corporate donors who'd been stuck in a traffic jam that started at four am and was still total gridlock at four pm.

"How in the H-E-Double-EL am I going to make it to the Braves game?", said one caller. "If this is not fixed by Sunday, you can find yourself another god darned ticket to a box seat for the Falcons game!", said another.

Fortunately, the mayor and council knew exactly what to do under the circumstances. They called the governor. They missed him by five minutes though, as he had just gone into an emergency cabinet meeting that he called when the Commissioner of the Georgia Public Service, the honorable Bubba McDonald, was deluged with calls from concerned corporate investors asking "what the hell are you idiots in Atlanta doing to protect our bottom line with all this new Beijing money coming into the state?".

Fortunately, the governor and cabinet knew exactly what to do under the circumstances. They called the president. They missed him by five minutes though, as he had just started an 'emergency nine' at the Bedminster New Jersey golf course. Next, they tried the vice president, but missed him by five minutes as he had just gone into an emergency meeting with a group of evangelical ministers that was called to respond to wealthy parishioners concerns who

overnight, had become visible, cultural, political and economic minorities.

The governor was finally able to reach a senior senator from South Carolina who listened to the Georgia cabinet voice their concerns via speaker phone before replying; “what can I tell you boys, looks like them tariffs didn’t work after all. Sorry, I gotta go fellas; the president is three down to Mr. Xi with three to play with a ten-footer to stay in the game andwell, it looks like Jacksonville’s about to get a neighbour. Boys, say hello to Shanghai, Florida”.

Author notes

Thanks to my friend P Kellach Waddle for the inspiration. 'Emergency nine' is a golfing term used to describe the playing of an additional nine holes following completion of eighteen. It's usually at the behest of a gambler who has lost everything and declares an 'emergency' to try to minimise their losses