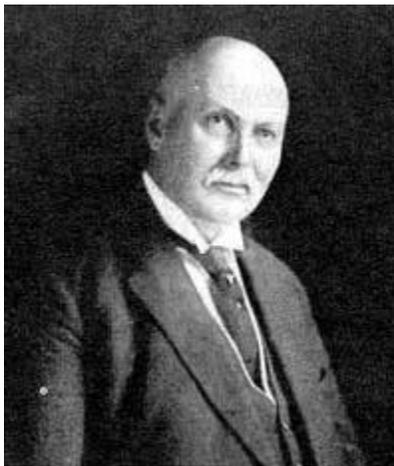


Dilworth's Early History

1890-1911

By Dan L. Morrill

The early history of Dilworth is intimately associated with the career of Edward Dilworth Latta. In October, 1876, traveling salesman Latta moved from New York City to Charlotte and established E. D. Latta and Brothers, a men's clothing store.¹ Apparently, the enterprising haberdasher was attracted by the vigorous economic climate in Charlotte and the prospects for making money. Latta's impact on the Queen City, however, was to go far beyond that engendered by his clothing business. Until his departure in May, 1923, Latta played a pivotal role in the transformation of the city from a modest commercial center of 7,094 inhabitants in 1880 into an industrial and financial metropolis of the Piedmont in 1920, boasting a population of 46,338.² In large measure, Latta was typical of the new class of investors, industrialists, and businessmen who arose in North Carolina and the South following the Civil War. As exponents of a "New South," such men became convinced that future wealth in the region lay not in agriculture but in industrialization and urbanization, and they took advantage of the new economic opportunities afforded by the growth of manufacturing and the rise of sizable urban areas. Latta's accomplishments provide an instructive example of how these assertive and ambitious entrepreneurs operated in the cities of North Carolina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³



Edward Dilworth Latta

In 1883 he founded the Charlotte Trouser Company, which manufactured men's trousers for distribution throughout the South. Having achieved Latta was born near Pendleton, South Carolina, in 1851 and after the Civil War attended Princeton University prior to becoming a representative of men's clothing financial success with his Charlotte clothing enterprises, Latta launched a series of bold investment ventures that made a significant contribution to the growth and development of the Queen City.⁴

On July 8, 1890, Latta joined with Mayor F. B. McDowell and four other residents of Charlotte to create the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, locally known as the Four Cs.⁵ With Latta as president and principal driving force of the company, these investors hoped to profit from the surge of industry, especially textiles, which seemed destined for Charlotte. Their plan was to develop a suburb, named Dilworth, where they intended to sell lots and residences to the city's burgeoning industrial population, which composed the essential work force for the expanding industries. The manufacturing promise of Charlotte already had revealed itself in the 1880s when the [Charlotte Cotton Mills](#), the town's first cotton mill (1881), Latta's 1883 trouser company, and the [Alpha Cotton Mills](#) (1889) had begun operations. The founders of the Four Cs supported their project with the rhetoric of urban boosterism and characterized their undertaking as the "inaugural movement in the march of improvement" that would set Charlotte "aglow with the spirit of enterprise." On March 14, 1891, they announced that they had "no doubts about the possibilities of Charlotte. We have anticipated her doubling yea trebling her population in the near future."⁶

For their new community of Dilworth, the partners purchased 442 level and treeless acres south of Charlotte. The "large number of hands with mules and carts" that began to grade and excavate the site on September 12, 1890, built the road network for the suburb with relative ease. The unpaved streets, 60 feet wide, were arranged in a grid, intersecting at right angles. The major artery was the boulevard with a width of 100 feet. Block-long alleys provided vehicles with access to the rear of the lots, which ranged in depth from 100 to 250 feet.⁷

To connect their suburb with the city as well as to reap additional profits from fares, Latta and his associates decided to build a [streetcar system](#) between downtown Charlotte and Dilworth. Having purchased the city's old horse-drawn cars, the Four Cs in February, 1891, contracted with the Edison Electric Company for \$40,000 to install new electric trolley lines principally to serve Dilworth. The developers formed a subsidiary company, the Charlotte Railway Company, to manage the streetcar system.⁸

Initially, the railway company operated two trolley lines, which intersected in the heart of Charlotte at the square, where Trade Street and Tryon Street meet. One, the crosstown line, extended from the Richmond and Danville Railroad Depot (later Southern Railway) on West Trade Street to McDowell Street on the eastern boundary of Charlotte; the other, the main line, reached from the Carolina Central Railroad Depot (later Seaboard Air Line Railroad) on North Tryon Street southward to Dilworth. At the outset, the Charlotte Street Railway Company operated three trolleys on the Dilworth run and one on the crosstown line between 6:30 A.M. and 11:00 p.m.⁹

The introduction of electric streetcars or trolleys onto the streets of Charlotte captured the attention and enthusiasm of the citizens. The first electric streetcar departed from the square at 3:00 p.m. on May 18, 1891, and headed toward Dilworth, a "great and jolly crowd" cheering it along. The *Morning Star* of Wilmington described the reaction of the public when the entire system went into operation two days later: "The streets and yards fairly swarmed with people, each hurraing and waving as the car passed along. Bouquets were sent to adorn the car with, and every one was wild with joy."¹⁰

To assist in making settlement in Dilworth more attractive and to promote streetcar travel, the Four Cs constructed a recreational area, named Latta Park, at the end of the trolley line in Dilworth. The company hired Joseph Forsyth Johnston, a landscape architect, to design and supervise the construction of a lake for boating, a lily pad pond, a series of fountains, terraced flower gardens, and a network of meandering paths and drives. Latta Park became a favorite retreat for the residents of Charlotte even before Dilworth officially opened. On April 27, 1891, the *Charlotte News* described the scene at the park on the previous Sunday afternoon: "The winding walks and drives were thronged all the afternoon, and scores of promenaders could be seen coming in from the park. On the boulevard there were probably a hundred turnouts while the lakeside, flower gardens and groves were dotted with pedestrians." *The Daily State Chronicle* of Raleigh called Latta Park the "most magnificent spot of its kind in the South." The *Morning Star* of Wilmington urged the citizens of its community to open a similar recreational facility.¹¹

The Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company used a series of innovative marketing techniques to attract prospective buyers to Dilworth for the grand opening on May 20, 1891. Salesmen traveled to other towns to spread the word about the new suburb. A "great pyrotechnic display" and a balloon ascension were scheduled for the evening of the twentieth, and the company arranged for a baseball game between a team from Winston and one from Columbia, South Carolina. The most imaginative promotional gimmick was the placement of a deed in a tin box, which was then suspended from a small balloon and launched at the end of the fireworks show.

Whoever found the deed when the box fell to earth became the owner of the Dilworth parcel recorded on the document.¹²

P. B. and E. A. Akers, professional auctioneers from Knoxville, Tennessee, commenced the Dilworth land sale at 11:00 a.m. The mood of the crowd was festive as the auctioneers moved from lot to lot, standing in the rear of a buggy while it passed along the streets of the suburb. Two thousand buyers and onlookers followed "in hacks and buggies, on horseback and on foot, [some] with maps in hand eagerly bidding for ground." Prices ranged from an average of \$7.00 to \$10.00 a front foot or from \$350 to \$500 per lot. Buyers had to make a down payment of at least 25 percent of the purchase price and pay the residual obligation in no more than three annual installments.¹³

The prospects for Dilworth appeared bright. In May, 1891, 78 lots were sold to 47 individuals, 36 of whom lived in Charlotte or Mecklenburg County. "No better evidence of the faith the people have in the future of the city could be desired than in the way this suburban ground is selling," the *Charlotte News* exclaimed. On May 29, 1891, Latta announced that the construction of a "large number of new and attractive residences" was about to begin.¹⁴

Despite these propitious beginnings Dilworth was not an immediate success. The Four Cs did sell seventeen additional lots in the suburb from June, 1891, until the end of the year, but except for conveying a parcel to its trolley subsidiary, the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company did not sell any lots in Dilworth during the first nine months of 1892. Undaunted, Latta continued to invest large amounts of money in the suburb, especially for facilities in Latta Park. A pavilion, bowling alley, boathouse, shooting gallery, and baseball grandstand were erected in the spring of 1892.¹⁵ But the addition of these amenities could not obscure the fact that Latta and his partners were in financial trouble.

The first change in the Four Cs' fortune occurred on July 24, 1892, when the D. A. Tompkins Company, named for its founder and president, Daniel Augustus Tompkins, announced that it would build the [Atherton Cotton Mills](#) just south of Dilworth.¹⁶ Construction began on August 23, 1892, and moved forward expeditiously until the factory, which manufactured yarn, went into full operation in April, 1893. Even more importantly in terms of Dilworth's success, the D. A. Tompkins Company purchased an entire block in the suburb on February 23, 1893, and erected twenty frame cottages thereon to rent to its mill hands.¹⁷

The construction of the Atherton Cotton Mills provided the impetus for the establishment of an extensive industrial district in Dilworth. The second manufacturing plant to open there was the Charlotte Trouser Company on March 21,

1894, which produced between 150,000 and 175,000 pairs of men's trousers per year. In 1895 six factories were built in Dilworth: James Leslie and Company of Montreal, Canada, makers of card clothing, loom reeds, leather belting, and other textiles supplies; a sash cord factory owned by O. A. Robbins of Sumter, South Carolina; the Mecklenburg Flouring Mill, which produced three brands of flour -- Princess Charlotte, Royal Family, and appropriately, Dilworth; a spoke and handle plant; a shirt factory; and the [Park Manufacturing Company](#), producer of pumps, heaters, and elevators. By October, 1895, the *Daily Charlotte Observer* was calling the suburb the "Manchester of Charlotte."¹⁸



Industrial Dilworth, 1907

Because their employees found residences in Dilworth, the newly established industries in the suburb enabled the residential scheme of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company to survive. Conditions in the workers' village were far from idyllic, however. The deafening din of machinery earned the factories the title of "hummers" and dimmed plans for Dilworth as a fashionable community. Accidents at the Atherton Mill were frequent, such as the mangling of a worker's hands in June, 1893, or the death of an overseer who became entangled in a belting apparatus in October, 1902. Quarrels and brawls were common among the industrial hands residing in Dilworth, where they and their families found themselves living a highly regimented and stultifying existence in the shadow of the industries that demanded so much of their time and toil.¹⁹ In a manner indicative of many of the ambitious, pragmatic entrepreneurs of the New South, Latta showed little sympathy for the plight of the rising class of urban industrial laborers. "Benevolence has no rightful place in any real estate deal," he insisted.²⁰

Although it was housing for industrial laborers that ensured Dilworth's survival, the Four Cs did endeavor to attract affluent and middle-class residents to the suburb. The company introduced long-term mortgage financing to entice prospective buyers, and a cluster of modest houses in the Eastlake style soon appeared on the northern or "upper" end of South Boulevard and on Caldwell Street southward from East

Morehead Street. Wealthy suburbanites built a few residences along East Park Avenue and East Kingston Avenue. The results of the initial campaign to develop Dilworth as a middle-class and upper-income neighborhood, however, were less than spectacular in the early 1890s. Latta and his associates needed to take additional and innovative measures if their community was to become a booming residential district.²¹

Between 1894 and 1900 the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company installed an impressive array of facilities and services in Dilworth. In that first year the firm erected a powerhouse on South Boulevard, which generated electricity for Dilworth and Charlotte. The company also constructed an elaborate sewerage system; a waterworks, "including stand pipe, hydrants and electric pumping machinery of the latest design"; and a gas plant, which went into full operation in 1899.²²

Latta Park also received notable improvements in the late 1890s. A bicycle racetrack, a horse-racing course, a large grandstand, a football field, and a new baseball diamond opened on September 9, 1897. Dedication ceremonies for a summer theater in the park were held on May 18, 1898. Service on an expanded trolley network with double tracks along South Boulevard and East Boulevard commenced on April 26, 1900.²³

On September 1, 1899, the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company began a series of daily advertisements in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*. In these advertisements Latta lauded the modernization of Dilworth. "Where else in the Suburban world," he asked, "can you obtain railway service, gas, water, electric lights, and sewerage?" He also called attention to an expansion of his long-term mortgage financing plan, the so-called "rent money" system that the Four Cs offered to prospective homeowners. "Our weapon against landlordism is your 'rent money,'" he declared. Latta denied that his suburb would be an enclave for the wealthy. "So while we have property for everybody, for those in affluence, able to construct edifices after their heart's desire," he proclaimed, "our special work and calling is to aid those whose moderate income suggests a pause when the subject of a real home is talked of."²⁴

The middle class to which Latta appealed in the advertisement was the segment of the population that would leave perhaps the greatest imprint on the nature and character of Dilworth. Large, expensive houses continued to be built in the suburb; and factories and shops continued to appear, including a foundry in 1902 and a machine shop in 1904 for the D. A. Tompkins Company. But the majority of new structures were residences that the Four Cs constructed and sold to middle-class families. In deciding to cater to that rising stratum of southern urban society, Latta demonstrated his ability to perceive correctly the economic and social currents created by industrialism and the growth of cities in the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As one authority on the New South, C. Vann Woodward, has written, "Within the little

islands of industrialism scattered through the region, including the old towns as well as the new, was rising a new middle-class society."²⁵ Illustrative of the pace in Dilworth, fourteen houses were completed in a two-week period in the autumn of 1901, and by July, 1902, the Four Cs had finished seven more residences on Worthington Avenue, the heart of the suburb's middle-class district.²⁶ Four churches, fortresses of suburban middle-class values, were organized in Dilworth between 1896 and 1903: Dilworth Methodist Church (1896), Westminster Presbyterian Church (1897), Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church (1901), and [Holy Comforter Episcopal Church](#) (1903).²⁷ In 1902 the Consolidated Construction Company leased a large tract of land in Dilworth to the Mecklenburg Fair Association, which opened its fairgrounds there in September. In the following year Latta erected a large commercial structure on South Boulevard. The building housed a drugstore and a post office on the first floor and a public meeting hall on the second floor.²⁸

By 1903 Edward Dilworth Latta and his associates had played a powerful role in establishing Charlotte as a major industrial and commercial center in North Carolina. Between 1890 and 1910 the population of the city almost tripled from 11,551 to 34,014.²⁹ No less than eleven cotton mills had opened in the Queen City and its environs during those years. In the midst of this development Dilworth was booming; and to keep pace with the rapid citywide expansion, the Four Cs extended its trolley tracks into several streetcar suburbs that appeared on the outskirts of Charlotte, including Piedmont Park (1902), [Elizabeth](#) (1902), and [Biddleville](#) (1903).³⁰

The phenomenal success of Latta and his fellow entrepreneurs, however, did not come without conflict. Serious trouble first appeared in the form of a labor strike among streetcar workers on December 2, 1903. On that day forty-eight conductors and motormen who worked for the Charlotte Street Railway Company walked off the job and marched from the carbarn on South Boulevard in Dilworth to the Square, where they milled about, explained their grievances, and sought public support.³¹

The ostensible reason for the walkout was a dispute regarding the company's refusal to turn on electric heaters in the trolleys. The strikers generally received public support for their refusal to continue to operate unheated streetcars. "The people here in Charlotte are with the strikers and they are sure to win if they are orderly and well behaved," the conservative *Charlotte Daily Observer* predicted. The *Charlotte News* supported the action of the motormen and conductors, insisting that the citizens were "overwhelmingly with the men on the main question that the cars ought to be heated." Latta, who was in New York City when the strike broke out, arrived in Charlotte on December 3 to find many townspeople wearing buttons that boldly proclaimed, "I walk."³²

Latta responded to the labor crisis with characteristic firmness and dispatch. Indeed, he had already sent a telegram to his elder son, Nisbet Latta, who was becoming increasingly active in his father's businesses, instructing him to announce that the conductors and motormen no longer worked for the Charlotte Street Railway Company and that replacements for the entire work force would be hired immediately. In response, the mood of the strikers turned ugly as they gathered at the Square and hurled insults at the "scabs" who were taking their jobs. A rally was held on the night of December 3 in Typographical Hall, where the leaders of the labor unions in Charlotte pledged their support for the employees of the trolley system and contributed funds for their struggle. Cheers erupted when the audience learned that the majority of the businessmen of the city had signed a petition requesting the Four Cs to turn on the electric heaters and reinstate the men. F. C. Abbott, an influential realtor, headed a citizens' committee that met with Latta and attempted to resolve the dispute. The motormen and conductors agreed to return to work when the company activated the heaters.³³

Latta, however, remained adamant in a letter to the *Charlotte News* published on December 5, 1903:

I regret, beyond expression, the exigency of the situation, causing me to part with a body of men for many of whom I hold a personal attachment; but it could scarcely be expected by any thoughtful fair-minded person that on my return I would dismiss those who had graciously rallied to our interests and reinstate others who, without provocation during my absence, elected to abandon their position with no other expectation than that the company and the public would be without service.³⁴

The situation worsened on December 8, when Latta announced that the Four Cs was turning on the heaters in the cars but that the former motormen and conductors would not be reinstated. The *Charlotte News* proclaimed in a blistering editorial that the "only honest and manly thing to do under God's heaven" was for the company to admit that it was wrong and restore the men to their jobs. The newspaper challenged Latta directly, questioning the status of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company as a reputable corporate citizen and suggesting that the Charlotte Board of Aldermen might want to review carefully the gas, electric, and trolley franchises it had awarded in the 1890s to the Four Cs. The editorial writer minced no words in his conclusion: "The company has already given the strongest impetus to municipal ownership of the public utilities of this city that could have been given. And if the company wins, it will be a dear victory in the end."³⁵

Violence exploded on December 10, 1903, when a rowdy mob gathered on South Boulevard in Dilworth after dark and fired pistols in the air as the streetcars passed. That same night rocks pummeled through the windshield of a trolley in Piedmont Park, one hitting the conductor's ankle. Although strikers were not implicated, their public support began to evaporate. The *Charlotte News*, attempting to reverse the tide, sponsored a benefit performance on December 21 featuring Gilbert Warren, a humorist. But the situation was irredeemable. Edward Dilworth Latta and the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company triumphed, and the former motormen and conductors were forced to seek other employment.³⁶ In his refusal to negotiate with or reinstate the striking streetcar workers, Latta behaved with the traditional hostility to labor organization that was characteristic of most capitalists who came to the forefront in the New South. Such men, for the most part, were committed to laissez-faire capitalism; they viewed actions on the part of workers to organize or to strike or to bargain collectively as a conspiracy to restrain natural and productive economic activity. Latta's approach to labor relations was at worst self-serving and at best only paternalistic.³⁷

The decade following the 1903 trolley strike witnessed profound changes in the business activities of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company. Not the least of these was the loss of its utility franchises, although no evidence exists that these developments had any connection with public dissatisfaction over the treatment of the striking motormen and conductors. In 1904 the Four Cs did not submit a bid for renewal of its ten-year agreement to provide street lighting for a fee of \$90.00 per pole per year. The reason was simple. A rival corporation, the Catawba Power Company, financed by the legendary James Buchanan Duke and his brother Benjamin Newton Duke, proposed to offer the same service for \$54.00 per pole per year. Even the *Charlotte Daily Observer*, which called itself a "friend of the Four Cs," urged the city to accept the Catawba Power Company's bid and stated that the Four Cs' price was a "little high."³⁸

Considerable dissatisfaction among residents of the Queen City also began to arise with respect to the quality and cost of the gas service that the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company provided under municipal contract. Nisbet Latta, who administered the gas subsidiary of the Four Cs, lashed out at those who criticized the company. "This company has yet to fail in fulfilling its entire duty toward the Commonwealth," he contended. "It has maintained a quality of service in many of its branches which neither the size nor character of the town has as yet justified." The younger Latta referred to those who grumbled about prices as "socialists" who were "unwilling to pay for the gas which beyond any control of ours they have drawn from our mains."³⁹

The streetcar workers' strike, the loss of the city contract for street lighting, and the dispute over gas services and prices were all indications of the erosion of the virtual monopoly that Edward Dilworth Latta and his associates had enjoyed in Charlotte. By 1904 the economic atmosphere was changing, and competition began threatening the Four Cs' control of development in the city. New entrepreneurs and their companies were coming on the scene, eager to challenge and outdistance the extraordinary accomplishments of Edward Dilworth Latta.

The next and most devastating challenge once again came from James B. Duke and his flourishing utilities empire. Specifically, on June 6, 1910, Paul Chatham, a native of Elkin and a real estate developer who came to Charlotte in 1907, submitted a petition to the board of aldermen, requesting that his company receive a franchise to operate trolleys in Charlotte.⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, the Four Cs strongly opposed Chatham's petition because it would end the company's monopoly of streetcar service since the 1890s. But Latta also anticipated that he had more to fear than Chatham's incursion into the Four Cs' exclusive domain of urban transportation. He suspected that James B. Duke's Southern Power Company, incorporated in 1905 as the successor of the Catawba Power Company, had instigated a scheme whereby Chatham would sell his trolley franchise to Southern Power. By this plan, Latta insisted, Duke and his major stockholders would enable their proposed interurban electric railroad, the Piedmont and Northern, to gain access to the streets of Charlotte.⁴¹

The Charlotte Board of Aldermen approved Chatham's petition on July 25, 1910, after a "turbulent and stormy session." In deference to the concerns of the Four Cs, however, the board stipulated that the franchise was not transferable. But any hopes that Latta might have held that this provision would keep the Southern Power Company out of the trolley business in Charlotte were dashed on August 30, 1910, when the board awarded a franchise to the Piedmont Traction Company, the trolley subsidiary of Southern Power.⁴²

On October 17, 1910, Latta lost his last utility monopoly in Charlotte, when the board of aldermen approved a franchise for the Charlotte Power Company, a competing gas supplier. Shortly thereafter, the powerful Queen City entrepreneur -- conceding victory to an even more powerful businessman, James B. Duke -- announced that the Four Cs was selling its gas subsidiary and, more significantly, its trolley line to the Southern Power Company. Latta projected that the time and profits gained from this sale would enable the Four Cs to oversee its real estate enterprises "with... increased activity."⁴³

A large portion of that activity was directed toward Dilworth, which had been annexed, in early 1907. The suburb then became Ward 8 of Charlotte, and municipal elections were held there in May. As a member of the Charlotte committee that

recommended annexation, Latta probably supported the argument, advanced by a group of prominent businessmen, that admission of Dilworth would further enable Charlotte to become a major urban center. He also confessed that annexation would benefit the Four Cs by easing the company's responsibility to provide utilities for the suburb.⁴⁴

With new resources and renewed zeal, Latta and his partners began preparing eastern Dilworth for development. Having opened another park, Lakewood, in west Charlotte in July, 1909, the Four Cs drained the lake in Latta Park, demolished the pavilion and theater, and announced that the company would begin a major expansion in that area when its ten-year leases with the Mecklenburg Fair Association and the Charlotte Baseball Association expired in 1912.⁴⁵ In the summer of 1911 the Four Cs commissioned Olmsted Brothers, the most prestigious landscape architecture and city planning firm in the United States, to design the street plan and landscape of eastern Dilworth.⁴⁶ Edward Dilworth Latta, Jr., supervisor of development, traveled to Brookline, Massachusetts, and made an agreement for Olmsted Brothers to produce a general plan for the new 400-acre section of Dilworth for the fee of \$5.00 per acre.⁴⁷

Notes

¹ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, October 29, 1876. The *Daily Charlotte Observer*, the first seven-day newspaper in North Carolina, was renamed the *Charlotte Daily Observer* in 1897 and the *Charlotte Observer* in 1916. Edward Dilworth Latta (1851-1925) was a native of South Carolina and the son of James Theodore Latta and Angelia Wetherill Latta. His grandfather Robert Latta was an Irish immigrant who came to South Carolina as a boy and settled at Yorkville. James Theodore Latta studied law at the University of South Carolina but never practiced; instead, he became a planter and cattle raiser on a large scale at Ashtabula, a plantation near Pendleton, South Carolina. He imported and raised one of the first Hereford herds in the state. Edward Dilworth Latta was educated at Pennington Seminary, New Jersey, where he graduated in 1867 as valedictorian. He attended Princeton University but left at the end of his freshman year and entered the clothing business in New York before going to Charlotte. Latta was married twice—first to Harriet Nisbet in Macon, Georgia, in 1877. She bore him three children: Marion Nisbet Latta, Edward Dilworth Latta, Jr., and Janet Acton Latta. Following his first wife's death in 1910, Latta married Jessica Lea of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1918. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White and Company, 1898 and continuing [62 volumes to date with supplements and indexes]), XX, 282, hereinafter cited as *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*; R. W. Simpson, *History of Old*

Pendleton District (Covington, Tennessee: Bradford Publishing Company, n.d.), 118-119.

² *Charlotte Observer*, July 9, 1950. This issue contains a comprehensive analysis of official census records in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County from 1850 until 1950.

³ For discussions of the rise of industrialism and the concept of the New South, see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), hereinafter cited as Woodward, *Origins of the New South*; Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970); Holland Thompson, *The New South: A Chronicle of Social and Industrial Evolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), hereinafter cited as Thompson, *The New South*; Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1921). For an account that challenges the interpretation of Woodward and others about the men who led the industrialization movement in the New South, see Dwight B. Billings, Jr., *Planters and the Making of a "New South": Class, Politics, and Development in North Carolina, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), hereinafter cited as Billings, *Planters and the Making of a "New South."* Southern urbanization is surveyed in David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers: Southern City and Region, 1607-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

⁴ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, April 4, 1884.

⁵ *Charlotte News*, July 9, 1890. Latta's partners in creating the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company were F. B. McDowell, Dr. M. A. Bland, E. K. P. Osborne, J. L. Chambers, and E. B. Springs, all prominent citizens of Charlotte. The only manuscript sources concerning the activities of Latta and the Four Cs are the private papers of E. B. Springs held by Mrs. Katherine Wooten Springs of Mecklenburg County, which offer no essential insights. Consequently, the author has depended for the most part upon local newspapers, especially the *Charlotte News* and the *Charlotte Daily Observer*. The press followed closely the activities of Latta, and he wrote lengthy letters for publication in the Charlotte newspapers. The Four Cs also placed revealing advertisements in the local press in the 1890s.

⁶ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, February 5, 11, April 3, May 27, August 31, December 21, 1880; March 2, 19, 1881; *Charlotte Democrat*, January 6, 27, 1888; *Charlotte News*, March 14, 1891; LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockman, *Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally, 1961), 449, hereinafter cited as Blythe and Brockman, *Hornet's Nest*.

⁷ *Map of Dilworth: The City of Avenues* (Charlotte: D. A. Tompkins Co., 1891); *Charlotte News*, June 27, September 11, October 11, 1890; March 20, 1891.

⁸ *Charlotte News*, February 12, 1891; Mecklenburg County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Charlotte, Book LXXXVIII, 313, hereinafter cited as Mecklenburg County Deeds.

⁹ *Charlotte News*, May 23, 1891. Each trolley had a crew of two: a motorman and a conductor.

¹⁰ *Charlotte News*, May 19, 1891; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), May 22, 1891. The most definitive and comprehensive analysis of the evolution of streetcar suburbs in an American city is Sam B. Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (New York: Atheneum, 1971). Warner delineates the factors that influenced the development of Boston's streetcar suburbs during the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Although certain aspects of his explanation are applicable to Charlotte, especially the dynamics of what he calls "romantic capitalism," others, such as the massive influx of immigrants from Europe, do not pertain to the Queen City. The construction of an electric streetcar system in Charlotte was part of a broad movement that was sweeping the South in the late nineteenth century. Howard N. Rabinowitz, a historian of the urban South, points out that electric streetcars were especially popular in southern towns of approximately 10,000 inhabitants, The first community in the United States to obtain a citywide electric trolley network was Montgomery, Alabama, in 1886. But it was the ability of the Union Passenger Railway to surmount the hills of Richmond, Virginia, in 1888 that proved the practicability of the electric streetcar. Thereafter, at least until the panic of 1893, the replacement of horse-drawn streetcars spread throughout the South. Electric trolleys first appeared in North Carolina in Asheville in 1889. Work began on the Raleigh system in June, 1891, a month after the Charlotte lines had started operating. Howard N. Rabinowitz, "Continuity and Change: Southern Urban Development, 1860-1900," in Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield (eds.), *The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South* (Port Washington, New York: National University Publications, 1977), 113; Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, "Raleigh-An Example of the 'New South'?" *North Carolina Historical Review*, XLIII (July, 1966), 283; *Charlotte News*, May 29, 1891.

¹¹ *Charlotte News*, March 14, April 27, 1891; *Daily State Chronicle* (Raleigh), May 19, 1891; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), May 24, 1891. Recreational and amusement parks such as Norumbega Park in Boston or Willow Grove Park in Philadelphia were essential components of streetcar suburbs throughout the United States. Placed at the end of the line, the parks attracted riders to the trolley system. John Anderson

Miller, *Fares, Please: A Popular History of the Trolleys, Street-Cars, Buses, Elevators, and Subways* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 115.

¹² *Charlotte News*, May 13, 20, 1891; *Charlotte Democrat*, May 22, 29, 1891. One J. E. Brown found the deed and thereby became owner of Lot 2, Block 69.

¹³ *Charlotte Democrat*, May 22, 1891; *Charlotte News*, May 18, 20, 21, 1891.

¹⁴ For the transactions of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company during May, 1891, see Mecklenburg County Deeds, Book LXXVII, 437, 447, 589; Book LXXVIII, 435, 444, 449, 452, 459, 464, 466, 469, 477, 482, 484, 487, 493, 497, 528, 530, 544, 553, 559, 615, 617, 620; Book LXXXVII, 501-508; *Charlotte News*, May 20, 1891.

¹⁵ Mecklenburg County Deeds, Book LXXXI, 28, 45, 107, 110, 114, 176, 380, 583; Book LXXXIV, 240, 265, 267; Book LXXXVII, 509, 510; *Daily Charlotte Observer*, March 27, April 1, 3, 16, 21, 27, 1892.

¹⁶ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, July 24, 1892. Daniel Augustus Tompkins (1851-1914) was one of North Carolina's leading industrialists and New South leaders. Born of planter-class parents in South Carolina, he graduated from the College of South Carolina at Columbia and then as an engineer from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York, in 1873.



Having learned the practical side of industry by working as a mechanic, draftsman, and machinist in the North, he came to Charlotte in 1882 with the Westinghouse

Company. He remained to build a virtual cotton mill empire in the Tar Heel State. Tompkins also established a works for manufacturing cotton mill machinery, and he introduced a number of engineering innovations. He became a director of A and M College (now North Carolina State University) at Raleigh and was instrumental in establishing the textile department there. He was the author of a number of works on cotton mills and textiles as well as a history of Mecklenburg County. He also owned three North Carolina newspapers. As were the other powerful industrialists of his type and time, Tompkins was committed to laissez-faire capitalism and opposed public reforms for better industrial working conditions including the regulation of child labor. Samuel A. Ashe and others (eds.), *Biographical History of North Carolina: From Colonial Times to the Present* (Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 8 volumes, 1905-1917), I, 465-470; George T. Winston, *A Builder of the New South: Being the Story of the Life Work of Daniel Augustus Tompkins* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1920).

¹⁷ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, August 18,31, October 4, December 24, 1892; January 4, 14, 17, 18, March 22, April 12,1893; Mecklenburg Deeds, Book XC, 310.

¹⁸ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, July 31, 1892; December 9, 1893; March 22, 1894; January 18, February 6, May 9, 10, 22, June 7, 20, July 21, August 3, 4, 6, 14, September 6, October 23, November 6, 24, 26, 1895; January 31, July 2, 1896. Latta sold the Charlotte Trouser Company to J. C. Burroughs and W. H. Duls of Charlotte in 1892.

¹⁹ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, December 24, 1892; June 28, 1893; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, October 14, 1902.

²⁰ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, October 22, 1899.

²¹ *Daily Charlotte Observer*, March 13, 1893; April 6, 1894. The Eastlake style, named for British architect Charles Lock Eastlake, exhibits ornamentation that is largely the product of the chisel, the gouge, and the lathe. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), 123-124. Several of Dilworth's oldest houses still survive, including the Jones-Garibaldi House (1894) at 228 East Park Avenue, the Mallonee-Jones House (1895) at 400 East Kingston Avenue, and the Gautier-Gilchrist House (1897) at 320 East Park Avenue. *Daily Charlotte Observer*, September 8, 15, 1894; November 27, 1896.

²² *Daily Charlotte Observer*, September 30, December 4, 1894; September 13, 1896; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, October 14, 1897; July 29, 1898; May 6, 24, 1899.

- ²³ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, September 9, 1897; May 18, 1898; April 27, 1900.
- ²⁴ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, September 1, 5, 12, 30, October 10, December 24, 1899.
- ²⁵ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, March 10, 1901; March 27, November 6, 1902; March 2, November 8, 1904; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 150.
- ²⁶ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, October 5, 1901; July 8, 1902.
- ²⁷ *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, June 19, 1909; June 11, 1910; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, March 30, June 29, July 6, 15, 27, 28, September 28, November 24, 30, December 11, 14, 1897; January 25, March 4, April 7, May 28, 1898; February 1, April 25, December 10, 12, 1899; September 1, November 20, 1900; November 18, December 26, 1901; May 8, September 21, 1902; April 16, 17, August 8, 1903; March 15, 25, July 17, October 6, 1904; January 3, 18, 1905; February 27, 1913.
- ²⁸ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, March 8, April 6, September 30, 1902; September 3, 1903.
- ²⁹ Blythe and Brockman, *Hornet's Nest*, 449.
- ³⁰ *Charlotte Democrat*, June 19, 1891; January 8, 1892; *Daily Charlotte Observer*, August 18, 31, 1892; April 12, 1893; May 20, 24, November 19, 1896; June 1, 1897; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, January 11, June 27, 1900; January 14, February 11, March 8, 17, July 4, 25, August 12, September 15, 1901; March 21, December 13, 1902; February 27, April 25, June 18, November 30, 1903; August 4, November 19, 1904.
- ³¹ *Charlotte News*, December 2, 1903; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, December 3, 1903.
- ³² *Charlotte Daily Observer*, December 3, 4, 1903; *Charlotte News*, December 3, 1903.
- ³³ *Charlotte News*, December 3, 1903; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, December 4, 6, 1903.
- ³⁴ *Charlotte News*, December 5, 1903.
- ³⁵ *Charlotte News*, December 8, 1903.
- ³⁶ *Charlotte News*, December 11, 16, 1903; *Charlotte Observer*, December 11, 1903.

³⁷ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 148; Billings, *Planters and the Making of a "New South,"* 96-131. Latta's trolley employees worked six days per week, twelve hours per day, except on Christmas, when Latta suspended streetcar service so that he could hold a banquet at the Central Hotel and distribute prizes to the most productive workers. The motormen and conductors were paid 8 cents per hour during the first two years of service, 11 cents during the third year, and 12 cents thereafter. These wages were better than those of North Carolina's male textile workers, who made between 40 and 50 cents per day in the 1890s. *Charlotte Daily Observer*, December 25, 1898; December 24, 1899; December 3, 1903; Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 224. For a discussion of paternalism in the New South, see Billings, *Planters and the Making of a "New South,"* 103-113.

³⁸ *Charlotte News*, February 6, 1904; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, February 7, 1904.

³⁹ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, February 7, 8, 1904.

⁴⁰ Minutes of the Charlotte Board of Aldermen, June 6, 1910, Book XI, 470, Charlotte City Hall, Charlotte, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Minutes of Charlotte Board of Aldermen.

⁴¹ *Charlotte News*, June 22, 1910; *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, June 22, 23, 1910. For the activities of James Buchanan Duke (1856-1925) and the Southern Power Company, see Robert F. Durden, *The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929*(Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), 177-198.

⁴² *Charlotte News*, July 26, 1910; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, July 26, 1910; Minutes of Charlotte Board of Aldermen, August 30, 1910, Book XI, 495-496.

⁴³ *Charlotte News*, November 27, 1910; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, November 27, 1910.

⁴⁴ *Charlotte Daily Observer*, January 11, 12, February 7, 8, 21, 23, May 8, July 3, 1906; Minutes of the Charlotte Board of Aldermen, December 17, 1906, January 5, 1907, May 7, 1907, Book X, 65, 67, 85. Particularly alarmed by the lack of fire protection, the residents of Dilworth sought the incorporation of their suburb as a separate municipality because incorporation would allow them to levy and collect taxes for public improvements including a fire station. To avoid having Dilworth become a separate town, the Charlotte Board of Aldermen endorsed Mayor S. S. McNinch's proposal that the community become a borough of Charlotte in the same general way that Brooklyn, Queens, or the Bronx are part of greater New York. Under the borough concept, Dilworth could levy and collect its own taxes for public improvements. On July 6, 1906, however, the Charlotte Board of Aldermen abruptly

dropped the borough scheme and appointed a committee, including Latta, to formulate an annexation plan for Dilworth and other suburbs. The board adopted the plan and secured permission to annex the suburbs from the state legislature. Joseph Garibaldi and T. L. Kirkpatrick became Dilworth's first aldermen on the Charlotte board.

⁴⁵ *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, July 2, 1909; April 2, July 9, 1910; November 8, 1911.

⁴⁶ *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, July 1, 1911. Olmsted Brothers was originally the firm of the famous landscape architect and author Frederick Law Olmsted, who planned many of the renowned public grounds and private estates of the mid- and late nineteenth century. When he retired in 1895, his son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and stepson, John Charles Olmsted, became equal partners in the company, which was named Olmsted Brothers three years later. Allen Johnson, Dumas Malone, and others (eds.), *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 20 volumes, 1928; index and updating supplements), XII, 157-158. The Four Cs also hired Fred G. Bonfoey (1870-1933), an architect who had moved from Connecticut to Charlotte in 1908, to design houses for sale in the bungalow style, especially on the western ends of Kingston Avenue and Worthington Avenue. *Charlotte Daily Observer*, May 26, 1911; *Charlotte Observer*, January 24, 1933.

⁴⁷ Edward Dilworth Latta, Sr., had met in Baltimore in February, 1911, with E. H. Bouton, an official of the Roland Park Company, and asked him to arrange a meeting with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. "I think he wants to do things rather well," Bouton wrote to Olmsted on February 13, 1911. Bouton described the senior Latta as a man "who for a number of years had been in the suburban land business in an amateurish sort of way." E. H. Bouton to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., February 13, 1911; E. 1). Latta to Edward H. Broughton [sic], March 23, 1911; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to E. D. Latta, March 27, 1911; E. D. Latta to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., March 29, 1911; E. D. Latta to Olmsted Brothers, April 15, 1911, Olmsted, Inc., Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., hereinafter cited as Olmsted Papers.

For arrangements between E. D. Latta, Jr., and Olmsted Brothers, see Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to E. D. Latta, Jr., April 24, 1911; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to E. D. Latta, Jr., June 20, 1911; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to E. D. Latta, Jr., June 30, 1911; Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to E. D. Latta, Jr., January 26, 1912, Olmsted Papers. Olmsted Brothers assigned the primary responsibility for the design of Dilworth to Percival Gallagher, an associate. When his father died in 1925, Edward Dilworth Latta, Jr. (1879-1945), became president of the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, a position he held until he liquidated the firm just prior to his own death. *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, XX, 282.

