

# THE CENTER CITY: The Business District and the Original Four Wards

*By Dr. Thomas W. Hanchett*

The history of Charlotte's Center City area is largely a story of what is no longer there. The grid of straight streets that lies within today's innermost expressway loop was the whole of Charlotte less than one hundred years ago. Today it contains a cluster of skyscrapers, three dozen residential blocks, and a vast area of vacant land with only scattered buildings. This essay will trace the Center City's development, then look at the significant pre-World War II structures remaining in each of the area's four wards.

The Center City has experienced three distinct development phases as Charlotte has grown from a village to a town to a major city. In the first phase, the area was the entire village. It was what geographers term a "walking city," arranged for easy pedestrian movement with the richest residents living the shortest walk to the commercial core. This era lasted from settlement in 1753 through the 1880s.

In 1891 the new [electric trolley system](#) transformed Charlotte into a "streetcar city" with new suburbs surrounding the old village. In the old Center City the commercial core expanded, clustered around the trolley crossroads at Independence Square. Residence continued to be important, and the area continued to grow in population, but now the wealthy moved outward to the suburbs and the middle class and poor moved inward.

In the 1930s and 1940s the automobile replaced the trolley as Charlotte's prime people mover, and the Center City changed again. Cars could go anywhere, and in the decades following the Second World War the old trolley crossroads diminished in importance. Commercial and office uses scattered to inexpensive suburban land. Public and private demolition in the 1960s and 1970s cleared almost all the houses and small stores in the name of "renewal." By the 1980s, half of Charlotte's residents never regularly visited the Center City. <sup>1</sup>

The Center City's history begins with Trade and Tryon streets, the original Indian paths whose junction inspired the village's settlement. They became the Center City's main arteries, crossing at Independence Square near the center of the grid. The first one hundred acres of blocks around the square were laid out under the direction of Charlotte founder Thomas Polk in the 1760s. <sup>2</sup> The blocks were nearly square, each about 400 feet long on a side. Polk's grid was set at an unusual 45 degree angle to the points of the compass to conform to the routes of the existing Indian trails.

By 1855, the original survey had been extended to approximately 220 blocks.<sup>3</sup> They comprised all of today's grid, stretching from Smith Street to McDowell, then called East Boundary Street, in one direction and from Morehead Street through Twelfth in the other. Although all were mapped before the Civil War, it took decades before some streets were built, McDowell for instance not being graded until the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1850s the village had become populous enough to split the grid into four subsections for election purposes. The city fathers drew boundary lines down the middle of Trade and Tryon streets, making each quadrant of the village a separate political "ward" with its own elected representative. Outer boundaries of these wards expanded as the city grew, until 1907 when a ring of seven new suburban wards was added around the first four.<sup>5</sup> In 1945 Charlotte abandoned the ward system in favor of officials elected at large.<sup>6</sup> Institutions like Second Ward High School and First Ward Elementary kept the old names alive in the Center City, however, and today Charlotte's original neighborhoods are still known as First, Second, Third and Fourth Wards.

*Gray's New Map of Charlotte*, published in 1882 near the end of the "walking city" era, gives a good picture of that first phase of development.<sup>7</sup> It shows a village about a mile in diameter clustered around the Trade and Tryon crossroads. Beyond what are now Morehead, McDowell, Twelfth and Cedar streets there were farmers' fields, less than a ten minute walk from the Square.

At the center of the village was the commercial core of one and two story brick and frame stores. The commercial area extended only one block from the square in each direction along North and South Tryon streets and West Trade Street. On East Trade, stores stretched two blocks to the railroad tracks and also turned the corners onto North and South College streets a short distance. Downtown's bulge in this easterly direction reflected the great impact that the city's first railroad had on mid-nineteenth century Charlotte.

This track, serving the 1852 Charlotte and Columbia and the 1854 North Carolina State Railroad, ran north-south between College and Brevard streets.<sup>8</sup> By the time the 1882 map was drawn, another line paralleled it on the other side of the commercial core. Built by the A. T. & O. and the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line, this track ran between Graham and Cedar streets. The two parallel rail rights-of-way through the Center City crossed a third track at Thirteenth Street at the edge of the district, built for the Carolina Central. As years went by each of these lines was double tracked, and freight yards were built between Cedar and Graham and between Brevard and College.

Land use outside the small commercial core in 1882 might be a surprise to present day Charlotteans. Because most people usually walked where they were going, the most desirable residential sites were those closest to the center, requiring the least walking. Charlotte's wealthiest citizens lived immediately adjacent to the village's downtown on Trade and Tryon streets. No direction was more popular than another. The handsome William Johnston mansion, for example, stood on West Trade at Graham. Wealthy landowner W. R. Myers lived on East Trade. The estates of civic leaders J. L. Morehead and Civil War general [D. H. Hill](#) faced each other across South Tryon, between Morehead Street and Hill Street. On North Tryon at what is now Phifer Avenue was the grand old Phifer plantation house with its pre-war slave row.<sup>9</sup> Intermixed with the fine houses were the village's half-dozen leading churches, including the predecessors of present-day First Presbyterian, St. Peter's Episcopal, St. Peters Catholic, and [First Baptist](#).

Interestingly, in the 1880s the fine houses were found only on the busiest thoroughfares. Side street blocks, even when they were a shorter walk from downtown, were the province of the middle class. Geographers who have studied America's "walking cities" have noted that most follow a concentric ring pattern, with the commercial core surrounded by a ring of wealthy residents, then a ring of middle-class, and finally a ring of poor. Charlotte's wealthy residents did not completely ring the core in accordance with this pattern.

The grouping of grand houses on the busiest streets may be a distinctively southern practice. The pattern may be observed, for example, in nearby Concord, North Carolina, where residential areas remain much as they were in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Researcher John Kellog has noted the same tendency in Lexington, Kentucky, in the same period.<sup>10</sup> Southerners evidently enjoyed building their mansions where visitors could best notice them.

Beyond the two main streets of nineteenth century Charlotte, the concentric ring theory seems to apply. Back from Trade and Tryon in the four wards were the middle class and finally, toward the edge of the city at the farthest walking distance from the Square, the dwellings of the poor. Buildings on Gray's 1882 map get smaller and smaller as one moves out from the center.

Also close to the edge of the city were non-residential uses that needed inexpensive land: schools, factories, and cemeteries. The Carolina Military Institute was near present-day Morehead and Brevard streets, the Charlotte Female College was at Ninth and College, and the Graded School, the city's early elementary school, was at Tenth and what is now Caldwell. One may note the parallel between the location of the early schools and the site of today's University of North Carolina at Charlotte, incidentally, all at the edge of the city where land is least costly. Other fringe land uses in 1882

included the recently created Elmwood and Pinewood cemeteries, the fledgling [Charlotte Cotton Mill](#), and the prosperous Mecklenburg Iron Works. All were located in the area of West Trade and Graham streets, then the edge of the village.

The [streetcar](#) era of development began with the introduction of the horse-drawn streetcar in 1887, but started in earnest when the system was electrified in 1891. <sup>11</sup> Charlotte was growing quickly as a textile and distribution center for the New South. The growth did not follow established patterns, however, but forged new ones as Charlotte changed from a "walking city" to a "streetcar city." A building map by the Sanborn Insurance Company, drawn in 1929 near the end of this second development phase, illustrates how this transformation affected the Center City. <sup>12</sup>

The Center City continued to have many residences, but it was now the commercial and office center for a city of nearly 83,000 citizens. <sup>13</sup> By the 1920s mass transit had turned the old "walking city" ring pattern inside out. Wealthiest citizens were moving out of the Center City to a new ring of "streetcar suburbs" including Myers Park, Elizabeth, Dilworth and Wilmore.

A major effect of this change was a greatly expanded commercial core. The bigger city needed more stores and offices. The 1929 map shows the commercial area extending out to West Trade Street to the Post Office beyond Mint Street, along East Trade Street past Brevard, up North Tryon as far as Eighth, and down South Tryon to Stonewall. Most buildings were three and four story brick structures, but half a dozen skyscrapers jutted above the church spires.

Trade and Tryon were no longer the only commercial streets. Hundreds of small stores lined College and Church streets all the way from First Street to Sixth. Businesses dominated the first blocks of South Poplar, North Brevard, South Mint, First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh streets as well. One could walk four or more blocks from the Square in any direction and pass nothing but businesses. The Center City was bustling like no time before or since.

Beyond the central business district, fine houses were still to be found on Trade Street and Tryon Street, and on College and Church streets which had become fashionable addresses in the 1890s. The suburbs were the choice location for new mansions after the 1910s, but many of the established families continued to live in their downtown residences. The major churches reflected this reality by building new, larger sanctuaries in the Center City. [Old First Baptist](#)(now Spirit Square), **St. Peter's Episcopal**, **St. Peter's Catholic** and the now demolished Second Presbyterian Church (site of Kimbrell's Furniture today) were all constructed on Tryon Street between 1893 and 1908. <sup>14</sup> **First United Methodist** and [First A. R. P.](#), both erected on North

Tryon in the mid 1920s, show how recently that area was a highly desirable place to live.



*First United Methodist Church*

Back from the business district and the main streets there was still a large amount of Center City residential area. Blocks which had had only a house or two in 1882 were filled up by 1929, all the way to the edge of the grid. On some residential streets nearest the Square, small apartment buildings, like the Frederick on North Church Street or the Poplar on West Tenth, replaced old single-family houses.

Around the edges of the grid there were a few new residential streets, filling out what is now thought of as the Center City. These did not usually follow the urban grid but instead followed the more random suburban prototype. There were a few new streets, in addition to Hill and Vance, in Second and Third Wards between First Street and Morehead Street. Development also finally passed Cedar Street, and residences now extended all the way to Irwin Creek, the route of I-77 today. These areas are now thought of as part of the Center City, but they were conceived and advertised as "streetcar suburbs." They were served by the West Trade trolley line and called

"Woodlawn" on the Third Ward side of West Trade, and "Irwin Park," on the Fourth Ward side.<sup>15</sup> These new streets extended the Center City to its current boundaries.

Higher education had moved to the suburbs by 1929 in search of cheap land. Wards One through Four did have public schools, though.<sup>16</sup> In First Ward there was First Ward Elementary for white children and Alexander Street Elementary for blacks. Predominantly black Second Ward had black Second Ward High, and the wood-frame Myers Street Elementary school for blacks. Third Ward had a white elementary school on South Church Street. Fourth Ward had white Bethune Elementary at Ninth and Graham and black Fairview at Thirteenth and Graham.

Most hospitals clustered in the Center City at the end of the streetcar era. Charlotte's first hospital had been **St. Peters**, at the corner of Sixth and Poplar streets in Fourth Ward in the 1870s. It was followed by **Good Samaritan** (now demolished) for blacks in Third Ward in the 1880s, reputedly the first privately funded black hospital in the United States. By the 1900s, several medical facilities were to be found in the blocks around the Square. These included the 1903 **Presbyterian Hospital** at the corner of West Trade and Church streets, the 1906 **Mercy Hospital's** original quarters behind St. Peters Catholic Church, D. A. Tompkins' **Charlotte Sanitarium**, erected in 1907 at Seventh and Church Streets, and the short-lived **North Carolina Medical College** at Fifth and Church.<sup>17</sup> In the teens, the hospitals began to follow the trolley lines out to cheap suburban land for their new buildings, led by Mercy in 1916 and Presbyterian in 1918, but Fourth Ward downtown remained the acknowledged "medical center," as evidenced by the construction in the late 1920s of the Professional Building at Seventh and North Tryon, a high-rise housing numerous doctor's offices, as well as a medical library.

The Center City's railroad lines in 1929 still ran much as they had on the 1882 map, with the addition of the new Piedmont and Northern electric interurban tracks in Third Ward. By 1929, however, the land among them was almost all taken by factories and warehouses, indicative of Charlotte's rising importance as a distribution center. Streets crossed the railroad at grade except in two places. A bridge built in the 1890s carried East Morehead over the tracks at the corner of South Boulevard, and an underpass nicknamed the "subway" carried East Trade under the railroad between College and Brevard streets beginning in the 1910s.<sup>18</sup> These two bridges do not seem remarkable today, but in the early twentieth century when dozens of daily trains backed up traffic at other crossings, these bridges were very important. Myers Park planner Earle Sumner Draper credits them as a spur to the suburban development of southeast Charlotte in the late 1910s and 1920s, a major factor in that sector's emergence in the period as the city's favorite residential area.<sup>19</sup>

A map of "Uptown Charlotte Land Use, 1981," published in the *Atlas of Charlotte Mecklenburg*, shows the results of the Center City's third era of development.<sup>20</sup> As the center of an "automobile city," the area has lost most of its residential and commercial functions. The majority of property parcels are now vacant.

Today the commercial area no longer extends several blocks in every direction from the Square. Half a block back from Tryon, over most of its length, there are now only parking lots. The once bustling commercial side streets contain little but cleared land. At the same time the commercial core has lengthened north and south on Tryon, as 1950s motels interspersed with unused land replaced eighteenth and nineteenth century mansions.

First Ward is largely vacant, dominated by the 1967 Earle Village low-rise public housing project. In Second Ward a handful of government buildings preside over acres of grass and parking. Third and Fourth Wards are somewhat more lively, both having retained some residential and commercial building stock supplemented by new condominium construction, but both have many empty parcels.

The story of the transformation of the Center City begins in the 1940s. Though Charlotte residents began driving automobiles in the early 1900s, it took several decades before this new transportation mode had a noticeable effect on land use patterns in the Center City. The beginning of the changes came in 1946 when the first section of Independence Boulevard opened.<sup>21</sup> The expressway sliced through the heart of black Second Ward and then eastward through the Elizabeth and Chantilly neighborhoods.

The expressway soon began to draw businesses from downtown to the cheap farmland at the edge of the city. The trend accelerated in 1956 when Park Road Shopping Center opened at what was then the southern edge of the city.<sup>22</sup> Developed by Charlottean A. V. Blankenship, it was the region's first major strip shopping center.<sup>23</sup> It was quickly followed by a host of others, including Charlottetown Mall in 1959 (now Market Square), which was one of the first enclosed malls in the Southeast, and the luxurious enclosed South Park in 1973.<sup>24</sup>

As suburban lures pulled some businesses out of the Center City, a combination of the automobile's need for parking with investment and property tax policies pushed out others. Until the mid 1970s, federal and state tax laws rewarded new construction but not renovation of existing structures. At the same time, property taxes were lower on vacant land than on land with buildings. In this climate, investors demolished hundreds of the two and three story structures that lined Church Street, College Street, other side streets, and even parts of Trade and Tryon. They believed they could get a better return leasing the land for parking with the hope of new construction in the



future, rather than renting the existing buildings for business. An uncounted number of small businessmen were pushed to suburban locations or forced into early retirement. Today it is probable that fewer retail businesses remain within a four block walk of the Square than existed there at the turn of the century when Charlotte was a small town of less than 20,000 residents.

The weakening of the commercial core was accompanied by the demolition of the ring of housing around it. As early as the 1940s, Charlotte's city fathers had begun considering "slum clearance".<sup>25</sup> At first, the phrase meant clearing up slum conditions, not demolishing buildings. Despite anguished cries from a few property owners that it was "unnecessary, unreasonable. . .socialistic and un-American," the city began to enforce a Standard Housing Ordinance in 1948.<sup>26</sup> It required that every Charlotte dwelling unit have running water, an indoor toilet, tub and shower, a kitchen sink, and adequate window screens to control flies. Minimum room sizes and provision of hot water were considered, but the city agreed with the protesting real estate association that this would be too much to ask.<sup>27</sup> Though some houses were demolished, much of the city's worst housing gradually began to be improved, as national magazines in the early 1950s noted.<sup>28</sup>

When the U. S. Government began its Urban Renewal program in the 1950s, thought in Charlotte shifted from helping low income residents.<sup>29</sup> With an apparently unlimited supply of Federal money in sight, it now seemed possible to eradicate all low income housing and replace it with sparkling new business, office and higher income residential structures. To head the new Urban Renewal department, the city brought in Vernon Sawyer, who had experience with redevelopment in Norfolk, Virginia. "Heart of Norfolk Blitzed in Urban Renewal Project," the *Charlotte News* enthusiastically headlined a 1960 article on the new director's past work. "This 250-year old seaport has never been bombed by an intercontinental ballistic missile, although it sometimes seems a little that way."<sup>30</sup>

Sawyer began clearance in Charlotte's Second Ward, also known as Brooklyn, the long-time black residential area. The ward contained some of the city's worst housing, crowded mid-block alleys built as slums and barely maintained by slum landlords. The area also held many of the city's black businesses, churches, and homeowners. Between 1960 and 1967 Sawyer's Redevelopment Commission razed the area in five stages, displacing 1007 families and 216 businesses from a 213 acre tract.<sup>31</sup> Over the next decade, the cleared land became the site of Charlotte's glistening Government Plaza, with the remainder being sold at reduced rates to private investors primarily for office development. Not a single new residential unit was built to replace the 1480 structures demolished.<sup>32</sup>



Federal Urban Renewal officials were alarmed at the displacement and threatened to cut off funds if Charlotte did not build new public housing.<sup>33</sup> In response, the city bulldozed the black residential core of First Ward, and in 1967 erected Earle Village Homes, a 409 unit public housing project.<sup>34</sup> Opponents pointed out that the development actually contained fewer units than had been demolished in First Ward to create it, and that it thus did little to redress the Brooklyn displacement. Although Earle Village's individual low-rise brick units by Charlotte architect Louis Asbury have won praise for their home-like design, many observers questioned the wisdom of such a large, self-contained concentration of poverty, and as a result Charlotte today has a policy of "scattered-site" public housing, small groups of units blended into neighborhoods around the city.

The early 1970s saw the clearance of the remainder of First Ward surrounding Earle Village, scattering 216 families and sixty-two businesses.<sup>35</sup> When a lawsuit was filed in an attempt to require renovation of existing homes instead of wholesale clearance, the city responded by moving half a dozen homes to Eighth Street at great expense and renovating them, a project the newspapers were quick to dub "The Gilded Row."<sup>36</sup>

A major portion of the residential area of Third Ward was demolished at the same time. Three blocks of the city's commercial core along East Trade Street were also leveled with Urban Renewal money in these years, the site of the present NCNB tower, the Civic Center, and a third block at East Trade and Brevard that remains vacant today, ten years later.<sup>37</sup> In addition to massive public demolition, hundreds more buildings were destroyed privately. Generally relaxed building code enforcement allowed landlords to run houses down, and when crackdowns came periodically, owners usually stood to profit more by demolition than rehabilitation.<sup>38</sup>

By the end of the 1970s these policies of urban renewal had cleared almost all Charlotte's areas of deliberately built shanty housing. They had also resulted in clearance of the city's finest Victorian residences, in both First and Fourth Wards, and destruction of most of Charlotte's commercial area. The final stages of clearance ironically came at a time when renovation of Victorian homes became highly popular, and also at a time when public officials slowly realized that there were not enough developers waiting in line for the glut of vacant Center City parcels, even at low prices.

The federal Urban Renewal program was replaced in the 1970s by the Community Development Block Grant program. It has focused increasingly on improving residential conditions through renovation and some new construction, rather than on clearing residential areas for non-residential use. Private demolition in Charlotte's

Center City continues, but there is scattered evidence that the situation is beginning to change.

The redevelopment of Fourth Ward in the late 1970s and early 1980s set a new direction.<sup>39</sup> The city's 1966 master plan, prepared by architect A. G. Odell, called for the old residential district to be cleared and replaced with high-rise residence towers and open space. Instead of backing this demolition, however, citizens influenced by the growing nationwide historic preservation movement salvaged a few of the remaining old houses. Around this nucleus a large amount of low-rise condominium construction has taken place. For the first time in decades, a Center City neighborhood is once again a highly desirable residential area.

Fourth Ward's success led to other projects. The few remaining blocks of the old "Woodlawn" suburban area, now simply called "Third Ward," are undergoing housing rehabilitation and condominium construction modeled on Fourth Ward. The city has recently sponsored creation of a plan for First Ward that takes as its first premise the retention of all remaining buildings, and proposes new low and moderate income housing plus commercial development. On North Tryon Street (Old) First Baptist Church reopened in the late 1970s as Spirit Square, a city-funded "arts shopping center" with theaters, studios, and galleries. Across the street, Discovery Place, a glistening new science and technology museum, opened in 1981. It, Spirit Square, and the existing Public Library are reestablishing the Center City as a cultural nucleus for Charlotte.

This activity is a very small beginning, though. In the two years since this survey began over two dozen more Center City buildings have been replaced by vacant lots. The structures lost range from warehouses, to two of the downtown's most successful lunchtime restaurants, to the 1926 Wilder Building skyscraper. Despite the new construction in Fourth Ward, the 1980 census counted a scant 4042 residents in the Center City.<sup>40</sup> This total number is smaller than the population of Fourth Ward alone in 1920, and less than the Center City has had at any time since the 1860s.<sup>41</sup>

## **First Ward:**

First Ward has historically been the Center City's most racially and economically integrated area. It has been the home of rich and poor, black and white, including some of the city's finest homes and businesses. Though hard hit by urban renewal, a surprising amount still remains of the area's heritage.

In the years after the Civil War, First Ward was known as Mechanicsville because of the large number of workers from the Confederate Naval Yard across Trade Street who settled there.<sup>42</sup> The **James B. Galloway house** at 702 North Brevard is a reminder of the era, a cottage built in 1870 by a man who had come to the city to work at the Naval Yard.<sup>43</sup> A later remnant of First Ward's working-class past is the former **Advent Christian Church**, 115 N. McDowell, now the centerpiece of an imaginative office condominium project. It was built in 1919 by a congregation of such modest means that architect Louis Asbury donated a set of plans he had already developed for a chapel at the Andrew Jackson Training School in Concord.<sup>44</sup>



*Advent Christian Church*

First Ward's white working-class residents were evidently amicable toward the idea of black neighbors. By 1897, and probably much earlier, city directories showed the neighborhood was a mixture of black and white.<sup>45</sup> There were some all-black blocks, particularly on Alexander and Sixth streets, but on many blockfronts black and white residents lived side by side. Though patterns did shift over the decades, this integration was no transitional phenomenon. Researcher Janette Greenwood has found that integrated block-fronts persisted into the 1930s and that whites did not leave the ward until demolition of adjacent Brooklyn in the 1960s created a sudden, intense black demand for housing elsewhere in the Center City. Greenwood's mapping of directory data is corroborated by elderly former residents like Aurelia Tate Henderson, who remembers, "The neighborhood was white and colored, and I must say we got along very nice together. We didn't know what it was to lock our house, on Seventh Street. We didn't even have a key to the house. It stayed unlocked all the time."<sup>46</sup>

Most black landmarks of First Ward succumbed to Urban Renewal, including the imposing residence of the A.M.E. Zion bishop G. W. Clinton on North Myers Street and the Hotel Alexander on North McDowell where Louis Armstrong stayed when he

played in Charlotte. Two churches remain as a reminder of the neighborhood's black heritage. The Neoclassical style **Old Little Rock A.M.E. Zion church** stands at Seventh and North Myers. Its membership when the building was erected in 1911 was primarily black working-class. Further up East Seventh at North College is the Victorian Gothic **First United Presbyterian church**. Dating from 1893, it "was the church of professional black residents of First Ward," according to Greenwood.<sup>47</sup>



*Little Rock A. M. E. Zion Church*

While the heart of First Ward seems to have been working-class black and white, the fine residences of middle and upper-class whites lined the major streets closest to the Square. A good middle-class example is the **William Treloar double house**, built for a local businessman in the late 1880s at the corner of Brevard and Seventh.<sup>48</sup> The grandest mansions of the day were first on Trade, Tryon and College Streets, then on McDowell at the turn of the century when the edge of town was becoming the new fashionable location. Only two of these upper-class residences remain in the ward today. The recently renovated **J. P. Carr house** at 200 North McDowell is one of the city's finest Queen Anne style homes, once part of several blocks of similar dwellings built on the street at the turn of the century as the city went through a boom period.<sup>49</sup> Not far away at 923 Elizabeth Avenue, the point where East Trade changes its name to Elizabeth, was the grand, white-columned Neoclassical **F. O. Hawley house**.<sup>50</sup> It is the last of the mansions that once lined Trade and Tryon to remain in the Center City. A former First Ward mansion can be seen today in the Plaza Midwood neighborhood at 1600 The Plaza, the 1890 J. W. Miller residence that was moved from North Tryon Street to the fashionable suburbs in 1915.<sup>51</sup>

First Ward's leading churches faced Trade and Tryon side by side with the homes of their wealthier congregants. Two well-preserved examples remain, both Neoclassical designs by architect J. M. McMichael. One is the East Avenue Tabernacle across from the Hawley house, the other is (Old) First Baptist, now Spirit Square, at 318 North Tryon.

Trade and Tryon were also the major business streets. First Ward commercial landmarks include the 1939 Woolworth building at 112 North Tryon, the city's finest **Art Deco** storefront, and the **1927 Carolina Theatre**, the area's only remaining "movie palace."



*Carolina Theater, 1946*

At 516 North Tryon stands the former Hovis Mortuary, a William Peeps design that is a rare example of use of the Tudor Revival style for a commercial structure.<sup>52</sup> Walking from the Square down East Trade one passes the ornately sculptured Belk facade at 115, the 1871-72 Italianate style **Merchants and Farmers Bank building** at 123, which is today the city's oldest surviving commercial structure, and architect William Peeps' sky-lit Court Arcade at 725 across from the old County Courthouse.<sup>53</sup>

Also of importance on East Trade, though less imposing, is a cluster of two and three story brick buildings at Trade and Brevard. The area, previously residential, was redeveloped for commercial use around 1910 when the city's second textile boom pushed downtown expansion. Much of the property was assembled and resold by the Mutual Trust Company with deeds stipulating, "Any building erected on the lot shall be of brick, at least two stories high, with sidewalls extending back at least thirty feet."<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the best building of the group is the 1915 Blair Building at 405 East Trade, with carefully detailed cream-colored brickwork and an elegant bronze cornice of unusual design. The group as a whole is more important than any single building, however, because this is the last place that one can experience a bit of the

concentration of low-rise commercial buildings that made up all of downtown Charlotte at the beginning of this century.

The railroad between Brevard and College in First Ward is the old Columbia and Charlotte, the city's first line. A number of warehouse and factory buildings dating back to the early twentieth century may still be seen along the track. The most notable is the **Philip Carey Warehouse** at 301 East Seventh, built in 1908-09 with fine Victorian brickwork.<sup>55</sup> Another notable First Ward industrial building, the Southern Bell Building, is not on the railroad. It was built at 208 North Caldwell Street in 1929, and today despite several later additions one can still see the exuberant Art Deco stone carvings that decorate its facade.

## **Second Ward:**

Second Ward was historically much less racially integrated than First. Its land lies lower than that of the other three wards, a health hazard in the years before indoor plumbing and storm sewers. Early maps identify the area as "Logtown," indicating that it was largely made up of rude homes.<sup>56</sup> With emancipation in the 1860s, such an area of inexpensive housing was a logical settlement area for the newly freed slaves that flocked to the city.

Dr. Edward Perzel of the UNCC History Department has noted that the ward regularly elected black city councilmen throughout most of the late nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> By 1917, when the first known map of Charlotte's racial patterns was drawn, Second Ward was solidly black except for Trade, Tryon, College, and parts of Fourth Street.<sup>58</sup> About this time, evidently, the nickname Logtown gave way to "Brooklyn" for reasons no longer remembered.

Second Ward contained a broad spectrum of black residences and businesses. At one extreme was Blue Heaven, a poorly drained hollow crowded with shanties where Baxter Street now crosses McDowell. At the other extreme were elegant houses along Brevard Street, including that of J. T. Williams, a key business, medical, and political leader who served as U. S. Consul to Sierra Leone, West Africa, from 1898 to 1907, appointed by President McKinley.<sup>59</sup> The area also contained Myers Street School, Charlotte's first black public school when it opened in 1882, and Second Ward High School, the city's only black high school for many decades.<sup>60</sup> Here, too, were the city's black YMCA and black Carnegie Library, the first public library for blacks in North Carolina.<sup>61</sup> There were many black businesses, led by the A.M.E. Zion Publishing House, which did all printing for that religion in America and issued the



denomination's monthly newspaper, making Charlotte an A.M.E. Zion center second in importance only to New York City.

Almost all traces of this community were destroyed through urban renewal clearance and private demolition in the 1960s, replaced by Charlotte's Government Plaza, two hotel towers, some office buildings, and a pair of automobile dealerships. Two black historic landmarks do survive on Brevard Street. The 1902 Victorian Gothic style **Grace A.M.E. Zion Church** houses one of Charlotte's oldest black congregations.<sup>62</sup> The **Mecklenburg Investment Company Building** nearby was financed by a group of black professionals in 1921 to provide the first office building open to blacks.<sup>63</sup> The three story building, which had a third floor lodgehall where many black civic groups met, features handsome yellow and red patterned brickwork by black builder-architect W. W. Smith.



*Mecklenburg Investment Company Building*

The homes of wealthy whites which once lined Trade, Tryon, and part of College in Second Ward have fared no better. Not a single mansion remains in the ward. **St. Peters Catholic Church** still stands proudly at North Tryon and East First Street, though it is no longer surrounded by houses as it was when it was built in 1893. On East Trade are **City Hall** and the (Old) **County Courthouse**, both built in the mid 1920s in the grand white-columned Neoclassical style.<sup>64</sup> They are set back from the street to form a grassy "civic plaza" which owes much of its inspiration to the White



City of the **1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition**, but part also to the fact that the buildings originally were part of a row of fine residences with front lawns.



*City Hall*

A few Second Ward commercial landmarks may still be seen on South Tryon Street. The 1926 Wilder Building at 237 South Tryon, demolished in 1983, was a ten story Neoclassical skyscraper. It was long the home of WBT, one of the most important early radio stations and later television stations in the Southeast. At 342 South Tryon is architect C. C. Hook's 1913 **Masonic Temple** (demolished 1987) with its enormous stone globes balanced on pylons flanking the entrance, an outstanding example of Egyptian Revival style architecture.<sup>65</sup> The 1942 **Federal Reserve Bank** (demolished 1997) at 401, a crisply detailed blend of Art Deco and Neoclassical influences, was an important factor in Charlotte's growth after the Second World War into a major banking center in the Southeast. **Ratcliffe Flowers** at 431, built in 1930 with a two story stuccoed Mediterranean Revival facade and matching interior, has been called Charlotte's finest piece of early twentieth century commercial architecture. Nearby, off Tryon at College and Stonewall Streets, is downtown's last relic of the horse and buggy days. The **Query-Spivey- McGee Hardware and Feed store building** served as one of Charlotte's main livery stables in its early years.<sup>66</sup>



*Masonic Temple*

## **Third Ward:**

What is now considered Third Ward is made up of two very separate areas. The first is the original Third Ward bounded by Morehead Street, Graham Street West, Trade and South Tryon. This area was once a mixture of residential and commercial uses following a pattern similar to that already seen in First Ward, though with fewer black residents. After the Piedmont and Northern electric railroad built its passenger and freight terminals near Fourth and Mint behind the Post Office in the 1910s, the area became the least residential of the four wards, with warehousing and commercial uses at its heart and industry on Graham Street along the Southern Railway tracks. A few

big houses remained into the 1950s, and a large black residential pocket near Mint and Morehead until removed by Urban Renewal programs in the 1970s.

A noteworthy building survived from the area's residential years, and was one of the Center City's most important historic landmarks until it was demolished. This is Good Samaritan Hospital at 600 South Mint. When it was erected in 1888 by St. Peter's Episcopal Church it was one of the first privately run hospital for blacks in the United States.<sup>67</sup> Added onto many times, it remained Charlotte's black hospital until the desegregation era of the 1960s.

The Piedmont and Northern terminal and freight station that transformed Third Ward have been demolished in recent years, though some of the track and a wooden trestle remain. The major reminder of Third Ward's history as a terminus for the electric interurban railway is the large Duke Power office building of cream brick on South Church Street between First and Second streets. J. B. Duke first used the site for the main offices of his rail line, then built the headquarters for Duke Power at the front of the lot in 1928. Also from the era is the 1924-1925 **Charlotte Supply Building** (demolished) at West First and Mint streets where the P & N and Southern tracks crossed.<sup>68</sup> It was a well preserved warehouse building of the type that the railroads attracted to Third Ward. The company was an important supplier of textile machinery to the region.

As with the other Center City wards, the Trade and Tryon edges of Third Ward were commercial. On West Trade was the **Hotel Charlotte**, financed in 1924 by a group of businessmen who wanted the city to have a grand meeting place.<sup>69</sup> They hired leading New York City hotel architect William L. Stoddard who created a ten story Neoclassical structure with elegant terra cotta trim. A block further down West Trade is the massive U. S. Post Office building with its long parade of limestone columns. Built in 1915, it was nearly tripled in size in 1934, displacing the old U. S. Mint which had shared the site for nearly a century.

On South Tryon are Charlotte's two finest remaining Neoclassical office skyscrapers; Louis Asbury's old **First National Bank** of Charlotte building, recently renovated as One Tryon Center, and W. L. Stoddard's **Johnston Building**, also newly rehabilitated.



*Johnston Building*

Both date from the mid 1920s when Charlotte was at the crest of her third textile boom. The street also has noteworthy low-rise structures. The Southern Real Estate building, now Binacos of New York, was originally the home of the company which had earlier developed the Elizabeth neighborhood.<sup>70</sup> It has a handsome Neoclassical facade designed by Louis Asbury, with white glazed terra cotta framed by Ionic-

capitaled pilasters. At the corner of South Tryon and West Fourth is the old **Charlotte National Bank**, a full-scale Roman temple with tall fluted columns erected in 1918. <sup>71</sup> The work of New York City architect Alfred C. Bossom, it is the city's, and perhaps the state's, finest Neoclassical commercial structure and one of only two temple-form banks in Mecklenburg County. Two blocks away is the **Latta Arcade**, home office of Edward Dilworth Latta who developed the city's electric streetcar system and its first suburb, Dilworth. Much of the facade of the building was destroyed in a mid twentieth century remodeling, but inside, the magnificent two story arcade space, lined with shops and offices and lit by sunshine streaming through clerestory windows and skylights, remains much as it was when it opened in 1914. <sup>72</sup>



*Latta Arcade*

Third Ward is unique among Charlotte's Center City wards in that it has retained a fair number of the store and office buildings that once lined all blocks adjoining Trade and Tryon. The former Industrial Loan and Investment Bank at 124 South Church is an example. It is the county's second Greek temple bank, sporting a delicately detailed stone and terra cotta facade believed to have been designed in 1927-28 by either J. M. McMichael or Martin Boyer.





*Industrial Loan and Investment Bank*

In the 200 and 300 blocks of South Church are the buildings of Film Row. From the 1920s into the 1970s this group of two story structures was the center of distribution for Hollywood movies for the Carolinas. Every major motion picture company maintained offices in the Row. The most architecturally noteworthy is the Art Deco building shared by Loews and MGM. Built at 303 South Church in 1941, the design features metal frame windows, yellow brick, and striking black glazed terra cotta trim.

The second section of Third Ward is the residential and industrial area beyond Graham Street and the Southern Railway tracks. This area remained undeveloped during much of the city's early history. The first major structure in the area was the now demolished Victor Cotton Mill, which opened in 1884 near the present intersection of Clarkson and Westbrook streets.<sup>73</sup> About 1907 the Victor Mill company, by that time known as Continental Manufacturing,<sup>74</sup> began to develop its surplus land as a residential area called Woodlawn. Though the area was within the 1907 boundaries of Third Ward and is today thought of as a central city neighborhood, when it was built it was considered a streetcar suburb, on the West

Trade trolley line. A 1911 real estate advertisement boasted, "Woodlawn is the nearest suburb to the business part of the city, yet NONE is prettier." <sup>75</sup>

Like most Charlotte suburbs, Woodlawn was not built in a day. The year 1907 saw platting of the area between West Trade, Irwin Creek, South Clarkson, and what is now Fourth Street Extension. <sup>76</sup> These earliest streets included curving Woodlawn Avenue, now renamed Irwin Avenue, Grove Street, West Fourth Street, and part of Victoria Avenue, which was named for the mill. <sup>77</sup> In 1912-1913 Victoria Avenue was extended to its present length, First, Elliot, McNinch, and what is now Greenleaf were added, and the first house sites on Cedar were mapped. <sup>78</sup> What is today Waccamaw Court was added in 1928, and the area's last street, Westbrook, was finally developed in 1939, an early project of homebuilder John Crosland. <sup>79</sup>

Woodlawn was somewhat more working-class than Charlotte's other early suburbs. This was probably due to its proximity to the Victor Mill and to the Southern Railway office building and yards on West Trade Street. It was also close enough to downtown for residents of modest means to walk when needed to save trolley fare. Though city directories show a wide range of occupations represented among early Woodlawn residents, a noticeable number listed the cotton mills or the Southern Railway as their employer. The old Victor Mill was demolished in the 1950s or 1960s, but the Southern Railway office building survives. Through most of its existence Woodlawn was exclusively white. Black residents did not move in until the 1960s when demolition elsewhere in the Center City forced them to find new homes.

Except for the large but architecturally nondescript Southern office building at 713 West Trade Street, no individual buildings of special significance have been identified in this part of Third Ward. The area does, however, contain one of Charlotte's notable concentrations of early Bungalows. The small frame houses lining Grove and West Fourth streets between Sycamore and Irwin create a streetscape that today looks much as it did seventy years ago.

## **Fourth Ward:**

Fourth Ward, like Third Ward, consists of an old section plus a new development beyond the Southern Railway tracks. Unlike Third Ward, however, the older area has remained largely residential to the present day. To a greater extent than any other ward, buildings from the area's residential past have been retained to the present. Yet even here a vast majority of the pre-World War II buildings are gone.



All four Center City wards originally had an equal share of the city's grandest residences, which lined Trade and Tryon in the early years and by the 1900s extended back to College and Church. Beyond those grand avenues Fourth Ward seems to have had more than its share of prosperous middle-class families, however, probably because the land is the highest and best drained of the four wards. About forty of these houses, out of several hundred that stood in the neighborhood into the 1960s, have been retained as part of the Fourth Ward Historic District.

A handful of these homes have been individually designated as local Historic Properties. They include **326 West Eighth**, remodeled in the Queen Anne Victorian style about 1880 for school teacher and Methodist minister Elias Overcarsh, **324 West Ninth Street** which was occupied for most of its existence by storekeeper E. W. Berryhill, and 129 North Poplar Avenue, which was built speculatively in 1895 and first owned by music store owner E. M. Andrews.<sup>80</sup> Though today these dwellings seem to be fine specimens of Victorian architecture, their owners were decidedly middle-class, providing a tantalizing hint of what the dwellings of the really well-to-do on Trade, Tryon and Church must have once been like. A single top-notch Church Street residence does survive, **511 North Church** built in the 1890s for foundry operator Vinton Liddell, one of the city's leading industrialists, and later occupied by Charlotte mayor S. S. McNinch.<sup>81</sup> Its rambling shingle-clad exterior is an elaborate blend of Queen Anne and Shingle style influences, and its interior retains all of its original elegant paneling, wainscoting, mantels, and stairs.



*324 West Ninth Street - The Berryhill House*

Along with Fourth Ward's late nineteenth century houses are a few early twentieth century apartment buildings. The finest is the 1929 [Poplar Apartments](#) at West Tenth and Poplar Street.<sup>82</sup> Its designer, the mill engineering firm of Lockwood, Green Co., used the Old English decorative motifs popular for single-family homes in the period, creating an elegant structure that remained an elite address even when much of the rest of the neighborhood became transient housing.<sup>83</sup>

To go along with its residences, Fourth Ward had more than its share of leading churches and other institutions. First and foremost is **First Presbyterian Church**, occupying a full city block on West Trade near Independence Square. It was for many decades the religious center of this predominantly Presbyterian city, with the village's main early graveyard on an adjoining block. On North Tryon Street are the 1927 **First United Methodist Church** by architect Edwin B. Phillips of Nashville, Tennessee, the 1926 [First Associated Reform Presbyterian Church](#), and the **1893 St. Peter's Episcopal Church**, one of the city's finest remaining Victorian structures, featuring Richardsonian brick and stone detailing.<sup>84</sup> St. Peter's Episcopal Church made Fourth Ward the home not only of its sanctuary, but also of the hospital it built in 1892. Old [St. Peters Hospital](#) at 225-231 North Poplar, the city's first civilian hospital, has recently found new life as residential condominiums.<sup>85</sup> A block away at 229 North Church stands the [North Carolina Medical College](#) building, designed by J. M. McMichael in 1907.<sup>86</sup>



*North Carolina Medical College*

As with the other Center City wards, Fourth Ward had stores and offices on Trade and Tryon near the Square, and industries along the railroad. Anchoring the Square was the 1907 **Independence Building**, now demolished. Surviving commercial buildings include architect William Peeps' 1920s **Iveys Department Store**, Louis Asbury's 1920s **Mayfair Hotel**, and Asbury's 1920s Professional Building office tower, all on North Tryon. Perhaps the most interesting commercial structure is architect M. R. Marsh's seven story Builders Building at 314 West Trade. It is built completely of fireproof materials, the vogue when it went up in the late 1920s, and features a ground floor arcade. It was intended to house the offices of all of Charlotte's contractors and builders, in order to facilitate sharing of technical information and hiring of subcontractors, part of a nationwide movement for "builders exchanges" that had begun around the turn of the century.

Probably the best known Fourth Ward industry today is Interstate Milling Company. Founded by Myers Park businessman Charles Moody early in the century, its sculptural grain elevators dominate the city view from U. S. Interstate 277.<sup>87</sup> The most historically important Fourth Ward factory is the old Charlotte Cotton Mill, now part of Spiezman Industries at Fifth and Graham. The present conglomeration of low brick buildings includes Charlotte's very first successful cotton mill, dating from 1880, the structure that kicked off Charlotte's New South Era and with it Charlotte's transformation from a village to a major city.<sup>88</sup>

Across the Southern Railway from the Charlotte Cotton Mill is the newer part of Fourth Ward. Like the adjacent section of Third Ward, this area was originally conceived as a streetcar suburb early in the twentieth century. Until then the only things on that side of the tracks were Elmwood Cemetery and its black counterpart Pinewood Cemetery. The cemeteries date from the 1850s when the city fathers decided to open a second municipal graveyard to replace the crowded Settlers Cemetery behind First Presbyterian. The new burial ground's winding drives and suburban location mark it as an example of the "rural cemetery" movement that began with Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery in the 1830s, a forerunner of the city park movement.<sup>89</sup> Today it holds the graves of most of Charlotte's New South leaders, including the imposing mausoleums of J. S. Myers and Edward Dilworth Latta.

About 1905 the Irwin family, who had long held the land between the cemetery and Irwin Creek, decided to have it platted for house lots. The resulting suburb, on the West Trade streetcar line, was called Irwin Park.<sup>90</sup> It originally featured a large park, today the site of Irwin School. As with Woodlawn, this neighborhood was white until the 1960s. Most of the original houses have been demolished in recent years, but some solid Bungalows remain on Irwin Avenue and West Sixth Street near the school.

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# THE CENTER CITY

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte News*, August 11, 1982. Fifty percent of the respondents to the survey, conducted by the Urban Institute of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, went downtown "few times a year" or "never."

<sup>2</sup> Danyne Romine, *Mecklenburg: a Bicentennial Story* (Charlotte: Independence Square Associates, 1975), pp. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> "Harris Map," 1855. Copy at Lawyers Title Company, 301 S. McDowell Street, Charlotte, North Carolina.

<sup>4</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "J. P. Carr House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> *Charlotte Daily Observer*, March 13, 1907.

<sup>6</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 16, 1976. See also "Charlotte apportionment" vertical file at the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library. The at-large system resulted in most public officials being elected from a small, wealthy area of southeast Charlotte, a situation that some say contributed to the government's callous attitude toward inner city neighborhood interests. In 1977, after a fight led in part by neighborhood groups, a district system was reinstated, though with different boundaries than the old wards.

<sup>7</sup> "Gray's New Map of Charlotte" (Philadelphia: O. W. Gray and Son, 1882). Copies are in the collections of the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library and the Lawyers Title Company.

<sup>8</sup> For more on Charlotte's railroads see the section of this report entitled, "The Growth of Charlotte: a History."

<sup>9</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, February 20, 1927. By 1882 the house was the home of a Mrs. Young.

<sup>10</sup> John Kellog, "The Formation of Black Residential Areas in Lexington, Kentucky, 1865-1887," *The Journal of Southern History*, 48:1 (February, 1982), pp. 34-35.

<sup>11</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "Myers Park Streetcar Waiting Stations: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1980).

<sup>12</sup> "Insurance Maps of Charlotte, North Carolina" (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1929), especially "Map of Congested District," frontispiece of vol. 1.

<sup>13</sup> The 1930 population was 82,675, according to a recap of past census statistics in Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, "1950 Census Data" (Charlotte: Chamber of Commerce, 1950).

<sup>14</sup> Data on individual buildings in this section, except where noted, came from the vertical files in the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library, city directories, title searches of selected properties, the files of the Historic Properties Commission, and LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockman, *Hornets' Nest: the Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961). Janette Greenwood provided much help in drawing this material together. Buildings for which the Historic Properties Commission has prepared Survey and Research Reports are indicated by footnotes.

<sup>15</sup> Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, deed book 224, p. 100; deed book 165, p. 663.

<sup>16</sup> *Miller's Official Charlotte, North Carolina, City Directory* (Asheville: The Miller Press, 1929), pp. 29-30. By this time most Charlotte suburbs had public schools as well, led by Central High in Elizabeth, the city's only white high school (Central Piedmont Community College today).

<sup>17</sup> Charles M. Strong, *History of Mecklenburg County Medicine* (Charlotte: News Printing House, 1929), pp. 98-118. Mary Norton Kratt, *Charlotte: Spirit of the New South* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Continental Heritage, 1980), pp. 56, 64-66, 72, 116-119.

<sup>18</sup> Dan L. Morrill and Ruth Little-Stokes, "Architectural Analysis: Dilworth: Charlotte's Initial Streetcar Suburb" (Charlotte: Dilworth Community Association, 1978), section 2, p. 9. *Charlotte Observer*, December 18, 1911; December 18, 1912; January 1, 1914.

<sup>19</sup> Earle Sumner Draper, interview with Thomas W. Hanchett, at Vero Beach, Florida, June 1982.

<sup>20</sup> James W. Clay, ea., *Atlas of Charlotte Mecklenburg*, 2nd ed. (Charlotte: Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 1981), p. 29.

<sup>21</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "The Road that Split Charlotte," *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 1982, "Parade" section, pp. 12, 15, 19.

<sup>22</sup> "Shopping Centers" vertical file at the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library.

<sup>23</sup> Mrs. A. V. Blankenship, interview with Thomas W. Hanchett, at Charlotte, North Carolina, June 1982.

<sup>24</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 28, 1959. *Charlotte News*, October 27, 1959. See also, "Shopping Centers" vertical file.

<sup>25</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 23, 1947; August 15, 1948.

<sup>26</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, August 19, 1948; December 30, 1948.

<sup>27</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, November 17, 1949; August 17, 1951.

<sup>28</sup> Charlotte formed a major case study in William W. Nash, *Residential Rehabilitation: Private Profits and Public Purposes* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1959), pp. 87-96. See also *Charlotte Observer*, August 10, 1949; November 1, 1950; May 6, 1951. Featured in *Saturday Evening Post*, March 1950, in *House and Home* the same year, and lauded by the director of the Federal Urban Renewal program, according to clippings in the "Slum Clearance 1948-57" file in the *Charlotte Observer-Charlotte News* Library. After five years of the program, 9,778 dwellings had been brought to code and only 1074 demolished.

<sup>29</sup> Federal Urban Renewal began with the Housing Act of 1949, "Redevelopment Commission of Charlotte, 1968-69 Annual Report" (Charlotte: City of Charlotte, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> *Charlotte News*, June 6, 1960.

<sup>31</sup> "Statistical Summary of Urban Renewal Program: October 1972" (Charlotte: Redevelopment Commission of the City of Charlotte, 1972).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Much of the housing indisputably needed clearance. In the notorious "Blue Heaven" district "down from Morehead and east of McDowell Street. . .the rows of close-packed 1920s shacks show that since that time it was meant to be a slum. . . 'Why did men build those houses?' (asked Fred Williams, head of the old Brooklyn Community Health Council). 'They don't care who lives there as long as they get money,'" *Charlotte Observer*, December 26, 1965.

However, the renewal process was detrimental for Brooklyn residents who owned property and for absentee owners who did care. It was nearly a decade between the

time that clearance was first proposed in the early 1950s and the time that demolition began. Owners no longer had reason to spend money on maintenance, and at the same time it was almost impossible to sell and go elsewhere. Critics eventually came to call this deterioration process "planners' blight," *Charlotte Observer*, January 19, 1960; April 15, 1965; January 19, 1971.

<sup>33</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, December 28, 1965; November 21, 1970.

<sup>34</sup> *Charlotte News*, December 7, 1965.

<sup>35</sup> *Charlotte News*, July 27, 1973; December 15, 1975. See also "Statistical Summary of Urban Renewal Program. . ." Center City neighborhoods were not the only ones hit by Urban Renewal. The Greenville section north of Fourth Ward was leveled and replaced with suburban Ranch style houses in the early 1970s, and a small portion of Dilworth between South Boulevard and Euclid Avenue was bulldozed for elderly housing at about the same time.

<sup>36</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, November 21, 1970; April 15, 1973; December 10, 1975. *Charlotte News*, March 20, 1975; February 23, 1979; May 11, 1979.

<sup>37</sup> *Charlotte News*, July 9, 1973; December 7, 1973. See also "Statistical Summary of Urban Renewal Program. . ."

<sup>38</sup> A good example is the old H. M. Wade mill village built early in this century in Third Ward. It was held in trust by a consortium of banks by 1966 when the *News* reported that the banks "demolished 86 houses last year, and the banks decided they did not want to invest money in improving the others. . . The property is administered by . . .NCNB, First Union, and Wachovia. . . The houses are on West Morehead Street, Dunbar Street, Mint Street, Stonewall Terrace, South Graham Street, West Hill Street, Lomax Lane, Emerald Lane, Bellinger Lane, Eldridge Street and Morris Street," *Charlotte News*, March 4, 1966. In 1983 these areas remain largely vacant. Other examples abound: Fourth Ward mansions on Ninth and Tenth streets demolished by owner Jones-Brown Realty, *Charlotte Observer*, May 24, 1969; more Fourth Ward demolition, *Charlotte Observer*, January 29, 1971; fourteen houses in First Ward demolished by owner Lee Kinney, *Charlotte Observer*, March 30, 1972.

<sup>39</sup> Stephen B. Griffin, "Fourth Ward Redevelopment: A Case Study of Issue Expansion" (M.A. paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1979), especially pp. 3-7, 18-24, 44, 47.

<sup>40</sup> United States Bureau of the Census, Twentieth Census: 1980, preliminary statistics.



<sup>41</sup> See the listing of total population and population by ward for each decade since 1950 in Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, "1950 Census Data."

<sup>42</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, February 20, 1927.

<sup>43</sup> William H. Huffman, "J. B. Galloway House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1982).

<sup>44</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "Advent Christian Church: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1978).

<sup>45</sup> Unpublished mapping of city directory data for 1897-98, 1916, 1926, 1936, 1946, and 1952 by Janette Thomas Greenwood for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission.

<sup>46</sup> Aurelia Tate Henderson, interview with Janette Thomas Greenwood, at Charlotte, North Carolina, March, 1982.

<sup>47</sup> Janette Thomas Greenwood, "A Brief Sketch of First Ward" (unpublished paper in the files of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1982).

<sup>48</sup> William H. Huffman, "William Treloar House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>49</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "J. P. Carr House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1976).

<sup>50</sup> William H. Huffman, "F. O. Hawley House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>51</sup> "Victoria: National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form," 1972, on file at the Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>52</sup> William H. Peeps, A.I.A., *Architect*, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1928 (Charlotte: News Printing House, 1928).

<sup>53</sup> Janette Thomas Greenwood, "Merchants and Farmers Bank Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983). The Commission also has files on the Belk facade and the Court Arcade.

<sup>54</sup> Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, deed book 312, p. 646. Title search courtesy of Janette Thomas Greenwood.

<sup>55</sup> William H. Huffman, "Philip Carey Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>56</sup> Butler and Spratt, Map of Charlotte Township. . .1892. Copies are in the collections of the Mint Museum of History and the City of Charlotte Historic Districts Commission. The map shows a "Logtown Road" leading into Second Ward from the south. See also Inez Moore Parker, *The Biddle-Johnson C. Smith University Story* (Charlotte: Charlotte Publishing, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Edward S. Perzel, interview with Thomas W. Hanchett, at Charlotte, North Carolina, October 1982.

<sup>58</sup> John Nolen, "Civic Survey, Charlotte, North Carolina: Report to the Chamber of Commerce" (Cambridge, Massachusetts: typescript, 1917), oversize handcolored map. The only known copy of this document is in John Nolen's papers, collection #2903, in the collection of the Department of Manuscripts and Archives, Cornell University Libraries, Ithaca, New York.

<sup>59</sup> William H. Huffman, "Grace A. M. E. Zion Church: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1980).

<sup>60</sup> Harry P. Harding, "The Charlotte City Schools" (Charlotte: typescript by Charlotte Mecklenburg School System, 1966), pp. 4-5, 11a, 12-13, 65, 70-72. See also pp. 124-125, 134, 139, 148 for more on black schools. A photocopy of this report is in the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library.

<sup>61</sup> Claudia Roberts, "A Brief History of Durham, North Carolina," 1983 (page proofs in the files of the Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina).

<sup>62</sup> Huffman, "Grace A. M. E. Zion. . ."

<sup>63</sup> William H. Huffman, "The M. I. C. Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1981).

<sup>64</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "Mecklenburg County Courthouse: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1977). Dan L. Morrill, "Charlotte City Hall: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1980).

<sup>65</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "Masonic Temple: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1980).

<sup>66</sup> William H. Huffman, "Query-Spivey-McGee Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>67</sup> *Charlotte News*, June 25, 1936, and other materials in the "Good Samaritan Hospital" vertical file at the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Public Library.

<sup>68</sup> William H. Huffman, "Charlotte Supply Company Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>69</sup> Edward S. Perzel, "Hotel Charlotte: National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," 1975, on file at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>70</sup> William H. Huffman, "Southern Real Estate Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>71</sup> *Charlotte News*, August 20, 1919.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Tompkins and Mary Alice Hinson, "Latta Arcade: National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Form," 1975, on file at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>73</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte, North Carolina. . ." (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1979).

<sup>74</sup> Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, deed book 224, 100; map book 230, p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, October 10, 1911.

<sup>76</sup> Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, deed book 224, p. 100; map book 230, p. 9.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, Map Book 230, pp. 234, 239.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, Deed Book 332, p. 189; Deed Book 772, p. 579; Deed Book 967, p. 571.

<sup>80</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "Overcarsh House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1976). Dan L. Morrill, "Berryhill House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1976). Dan L. Morrill, "Bagley-Mullen House:

Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1975?).

<sup>81</sup> Patsy S. Kinney, "Liddell-McNinch House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1975).

<sup>82</sup> William H. Huffman, "Poplar Apartments: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983).

<sup>83</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, May 1, 1983.

<sup>84</sup> Blythe and Brockelman, p. 202. *Charlotte Weekly Uptown*, May 5, 1981. *Charlotte Observer*, March 11, 1928.

<sup>85</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "St. Peter's Episcopal Church: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1977).

<sup>86</sup> Dan L. Morrill, "North Carolina Medical College Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1979).

<sup>87</sup> William H. Huffman, "Charles Moody House: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1981).

<sup>88</sup> Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills. . ."

<sup>89</sup> Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 16-17.

<sup>90</sup> Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office, deed book 165, p. 663; map book 3, p. 47.