

# Route II: South & East Charlotte

*Route II is approximately 18 miles long. Allow about one and a half hours driving time to accommodate frequent stops.*

**REMINDER:** Route II is divided into several sections.

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Once considered outlying country suburbs, Charlotte's "**New South Neighborhoods**" are now close to the center of the city. Typical of Charlotte's history from the 1880s to the 1930s, they reflect the city's rapid growth and thriving economy at a time when many other Southern cities were experiencing economic malaise. There were a variety of reasons for this. Unlike other Confederate cities, Charlotte was spared during the Civil War. General Sherman and his Yankees marched to the east, and the closest vestige of warfare was the burning of a bridge over the Catawba River by Stoneman's Raiders. In fact, the Civil War stimulated Charlotte's economy, for in 1862 the Confederacy located one of its Naval Yards here. This somewhat unlikely choice was made because Charlotte was a safe location at the crossing of two major railway lines. The shipyard brought in many skilled craftsmen who, along with the numerous Civil War refugees, doubled Charlotte's population from 2,265 in 1860 to 4,473 in 1870.

From this base, Charlotte was able to recover and prosper under the guidance of the New South leaders: industrialists, businessmen, and developers like **Edward Dilworth Latta, James B. Duke, George Stephens, J. A. Jones, and D.A. Tompkins**. These leaders were responsible for providing capital, power, transport, and communication, for stimulating commercial and real estate development, and for introducing new industries into the city, particularly cotton mills and cotton-seed oil processing plants. The overall effect was impressive. The stagnation of the last thirty years of slavery gave way to a boom that lasted well into the twentieth

century. Between 1880 and 1930, for instance, Charlotte's population grew by over 1,000 percent!

One result of this boom was a pressing need for expansion. Until the 1880s, Charlotte was a small town of about one mile in diameter, ringed by fields whose farms were less than ten minutes walk from the intersection of Trade and Tryon Sts., locally known as the Square. Fine residences lined its main streets, and more modest houses were tucked away on side streets. Transport within the city was invariably by foot, for despite the notoriously muddy roads, walking was still the easiest way to get around what was still a small city.

It was into this scene that the New South Neighborhoods were born. The first was Dilworth, the brainchild of Edward Dilworth Latta, a South Carolina native and great-grandson of the man who built Latta plantation (see [Route V](#)). Latta saw the potential for a new suburb to house Charlotte's growing population and set about building one. He bought Charlotte's existing small horse-drawn streetcar business, electrified the line, and made it one of the attractions to lure new homeowners to Charlotte's first streetcar suburb. Charlotte's growth showed no signs of slowing down in the years that followed. Other New South Neighborhoods emerged. Cherry, Elizabeth, Plaza-Midwood, Myers Park, and Eastover are all parts of Charlotte's expansion out of the uptown district. The tour will take you through these suburbs in chronological order and will give you a feel for how the New South suburbs evolved.

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*The "New South Neighborhoods" tour begins on East Boulevard at the intersection with Park Rd. You should be facing northwest.*

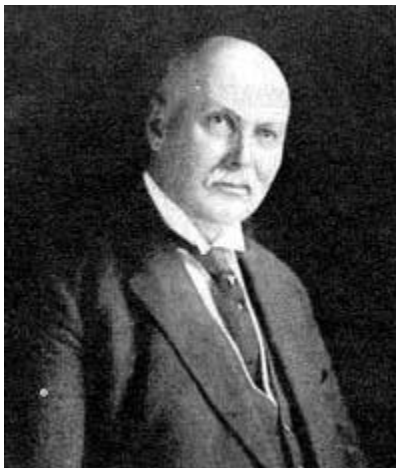
- **From I-77 take the exit for 74 East / John Belk Freeway. Take the exit for South Blvd. Turn left at the traffic lights onto East Blvd. Continue down East Blvd. until the traffic lights at Dilworth Rd. West. Now reverse your direction by driving around the block. To do this turn left onto Dilworth Rd. West. Take the first left onto Park Ave., then the next left onto Park Rd. Turn right when you get back to East Blvd.**

- From Charlotte, take S. Tryon, turn left onto West Blvd. and then proceed across the railway tracks where it becomes East Blvd. Continue down East Blvd. and follow the instructions above in order to reverse your direction.

## Route II: South & East Charlotte

### DILWORTH

Almost 100 years ago, this was farmland, and a suburb was only one man's dream. Edward Dilworth Latta was already involved in the manufacturing business in Charlotte when he formed the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company (the Four C's) in 1890 and bought 422 acres of farmland south of the city. Before the first land auction for his newly laid out development, Latta ran a lively ad campaign encouraging people to "buy a house with the rent money," and to "build a city where we now have a town." Other enticements included the promise of a park with a large lake, winding drives, gazebos, botanical gardens, and a grand pavilion.



*Edward Dilworth Latta, 1851-1925*

The sales began on May 20, 1891, before a crowd of 2,000 people. The event was boosted by the extension of the streetcar system to serve the new suburb. Originally, Dilworth was to be ringed by four grand boulevards, but only three were ever built:

East Blvd., Morehead St., and South Blvd. Here on East Blvd. the streetcar used to run down the center of the street as it headed for Latta Park.

1. Notice where the road narrows behind you. For many years this was the end of the line for the [trolleys](#). For 50 years these streetcars took passengers between the city and the pavilion. Speeds were restricted to ten miles an hour, and a bell had to be rung loudly as the cars neared a street crossing, but to Charlotte they seemed fast and exciting. Here at the end of the line people would have spilled out of the car and headed for the comforts of home or the pleasures of the park and fairgrounds. (The city fairgrounds were to the south of East Blvd.)

*Drive up East Blvd. heading towards South Blvd., notice the Greek Orthodox Cathedral about three blocks up on your left, opposite the Dilworth Methodist Church.*

2. Latta chose this site for his own home, which was not built until 1905-6. (It was demolished in 1965.) The very fact that his own house in the suburb was not built until 15 years after the suburb's inception suggests that Latta's development was not initially successful in luring new residents away from the city. Indeed, during the early years his company was only saved from bankruptcy by D.A. Tompkins, another New South leader, who kept the project afloat by buying a block at the southern edge of the suburb for his Atherton mill and mill village in 1892.



*Latta's house*

*Continue to drive down East Blvd., still a very gracious street. Just past the traffic lights at Euclid Ave., stop at the fourth building on your right, 311 East Blvd. (Now a restaurant.)*



*The Mayer House, 311 East Boulevard*

3. This was the first part of Dilworth to be developed, and for quite some time the streetcar passed through the countryside that divided the new suburb from the city proper. In addition to its turn-of-the-century charm, this Victorian cottage is worth noting as it was the former residence of the novelist Carson McCullers during the late 1930s. She drew inspiration for her novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* from the Charlotte that she saw. Particularly striking to her was the contrast between the affluent suburbs and the factories with their mill villages such as Tompkins's Atherton Mill just across South Blvd.

4. It is interesting to see how popular architectural styles changed during the growth of the New South Neighborhoods between 1890 and 1930. The house next door, 307 East Blvd., is a good example of the fashionable [Queen Anne](#) style. Houses of this type lined the major boulevards of the city, but there they mainly date from an earlier age. In 1903, when this house was erected, the Queen Anne was on its way out of fashion. Notice how asymmetrical the house is, with its pentagonal tower and parapet to the left, and its bays to the right. Also notice the variety of window styles, and the abundance of decorative woodwork.



*Crutchfield-Bomar-Brem House*, 307 East Boulevard



*The Brem House*

***Special Note:*** Walter Brem's first house in Dilworth, built in 1901, stands at 211 East Boulevard. It is significant because it is one of Charlotte's earliest examples of the Colonial Revival style. The architect was C. C. Hook. You will have to take a special side trip to see the Walter Brem House, because it is not on the tour.

Walter Brem and his wife, Hannie Caldwell Brem, bought this house in 1912. Although his main line of work was insurance, Brem also invested in the development

of the New South Neighborhoods. The Brems moved here from their larger house down the road, but this was not their last move. In 1916, Brem's young partner, George Stephens, persuaded Mr. and Mrs. Brem to move to the new suburb of Myers Park, but two years later they moved back here to this house complaining that Myers Park was "too far out in the country."

*Almost immediately after the Brem house turn right onto Cleveland Ave.*

5. The first house on your right, 1717 Cleveland, is a more modest version of the popular Queen Anne style, typical of the first phase of building here during the 1890s and 1900s. Mr. C.M. Scott, owner of the Good Roads Machinery Co., had the house constructed in 1900 to 1901.

*Drive two blocks, and pull to the curb just in front of the stop sign at E. Park Ave.*

6. The imposing [Colonial Revival style house](#) filling the corner lot in front of you, across Park Ave., is the largest surviving private residence in the earlier part of Dilworth. It has been described as "a product of the turn-of-the-century industrial boom which marked the beginning of the New South," but which retains "the polite dignity and generosity of scale expressive of the Old South."

The original owners were John Villalonga and his wife, Constance. Mr. Villalonga owned a roofing company and a brick making company. They only stayed for two years, however, and were succeeded by Robert and Mary Alexander in 1903. Mr. Alexander was another representative of Charlotte's boom years, being a successful cotton broker and "one of the best authorities on staple cotton in the state." He was also a colorful character and conducted his own revival meetings in a tent on South Blvd. His message was that material prosperity would only come to those who followed his lead: "If you prefer to live on bacon and cornbread, keep living as you are living now. But if you wish to have good fat beef-steak and biscuits and butter, be sanctified as I am." One wonders what the mill workers thought of his advice. Probably not much.



*The Villalonga-Alexander House*

The Villalonga-Alexander house was designed by [Charles Christian Hook](#), one of Charlotte's first resident architects. The son of German immigrants, Hook arrived in Charlotte in 1891 to teach mechanical drawing at the Charlotte Graded School nearby. By 1892 he was able to enter private practice, and he executed many of his first commissions in this growing suburb. He billed himself as a specialist in the Colonial Revival style, and his success can be measured by the prestigious projects he designed, including the Old Post Office building on W. Trade St., the VanLandingham estate on the Plaza, the Duke mansion on Hermitage, the Belk mansion on Hawthorne, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Station on N. Tryon St., and the Charlotte City Hall on E. Trade St.

7. To your left, diagonally opposite the Villalonga-Alexander house, is another gracious Colonial Revival house. This is believed to be one of Hook's earliest works in Charlotte; it was built in 1894 for insurance entrepreneur C. Furber Jones. Jones was at the heart of the booming business world of Charlotte's New South era. In 1894, he started the Piedmont Fire Insurance Company. Only 37 years old, Jones died in 1903 from pneumonia, and Joseph Garibaldi bought the house. A jeweler and local politician, Mr. Garibaldi worked his way up from the bottom. In 1896, he was able to open his own jewelry store with his partner William L. Bruns. He later served on the City Council and as Commissioner of Health, and eventually in the State Legislature.



The Colonial Revival style of both the Jones and Villalonga-Alexander houses represents a movement away from the fanciful Queen Anne houses of the Victorian period. Symmetry, harmony, and balance replaced the complex and whimsical mixtures of the Queen Anne. Both houses display classical features, with Doric columns, pilasters, and, on the Jones' house, modillions along the cornice.

***Turn right onto Park Ave.***

**8.** A stunning example of C.C. Hook's rendering of the Colonial Revival style is the house at 320 Park Ave., which is on your right just beyond the apartment complex. The wealthy New York widow Mrs A.R. Gautier had the house built in 1897 and sold it a year later to Peter Spence Gilchrist, a chemical engineer from England.



*The Gautier-Gilchrist House*

*Continue along E. Park Ave. When you arrive at the park, take the left fork onto Myrtle Ave. and then an almost immediate right onto Romany Rd. Follow Romany Rd. as it winds along with Latta Park on your right.*

9. Latta Park is the surviving remnant of the more extensive park which lured weekend crowds in the 1890s and 1900s. The valley on your right is the site of the lake where boating was so popular. Although sales were sluggish initially, by 1910 Charlotte's dramatic economic growth had secured an endless stream of new customers for Latta's real estate. As the population outgrew the city center, the new streetcar suburbs became the fashionable place to move to. To long term Charlotteans it must have seemed as if the whole county was being turned into a construction site.



*Latta Park*

Eager to follow up on the success of his initial vision, Latta sold his streetcar system to J.B. Duke's Southern Power Company in 1911 and used the capital to develop his Dilworth extension on the site of the city's fairground and ballpark. By this time the orderly grid-iron approach to suburban design had become outdated, and sweeping drives following the natural contours were all the rage. Not one to be behind the times, Latta hired the prestigious Olmsted brothers to plan and landscape his new suburb. The Olmsted brothers were the son and stepson of pioneer landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, and theirs was the leading planning firm in the United States. The landscaping of the grounds of the White House and Duke University were among their major achievements.

Since the development of the Dilworth extension took about 40 years to complete, some of the Olmsteds' plans were sacrificed, but the commitment to curving tree-lined streets can still be seen. You will notice a sharp contrast in architecture between the part of Dilworth that you are now driving through and its older part of the neighborhood that you just left. When the Dilworth extension was being developed in the 1920s and 30s, conservative brick Colonial Revival and [English Tudor Revival styles](#) were sweeping the Charlotte market, and they are well represented here.

*At the junction of Romany and Dilworth Road, turn left, and continue along Dilworth Rd.*

**10.** Dilworth Rd. was the centerpiece of the Olmsteds' plans for the suburb--a grand boulevard, linking Morehead St. to East Blvd. via two forks: Dilworth Rd. East and West. (The Olmsteds never envisioned the confusion that this has created, for they intended each road to have a separate name.) During the 1920s, the streetcar tracks were extended from South Blvd. down Morehead St. and along this road. They then looped around Berkeley, Myrtle, and Mount Vernon, and back onto Dilworth Rd. for the twelve minute return journey to uptown Charlotte.

**11.** Businessmen were not the only residents of Dilworth's streets. The movie star Randolph Scott lived at [1301 Dilworth Rd.](#) (on your right just before the church grounds) for a short while in the 1920s, before departing for the bright lights of Hollywood in 1927. He had spent his boyhood in the 4th Ward of uptown Charlotte. Scott's talent was recognized by Cecil B. DeMille, and he went on to make 150 films, mostly Westerns.



*Randolph Scott House*

**12.** Covenant Presbyterian Church was constructed in the 1950s when the Second Presbyterian Church joined with the Westminster Presbyterian Church and decided to follow their congregations to the suburbs. The success of the New South Neighborhoods had by this time drawn people away from the city center, and the character of uptown Charlotte was changing as businesses replaced dwellings. The church is on your right.



*Covenant Presbyterian Church*

***Immediately after the church, and before the traffic island, take a sharp right onto Morehead St.***

**13.** Before you get onto Morehead, notice the [Charlotte Woman's Club](#) that faces you across the street. Founded as part of a national movement the club challenged the view that a "woman's place is in the home." An early president of the club, Mrs. F. C. Abbott, told her members: "You should...include civic activities for the sake of [your] children. There are health, laws, school matters, and social influences which you should investigate and discuss." The group began with just six members in 1899, but soon needed more space than private drawing rooms could provide. By the time that this clubhouse was built in 1924, it boasted 500 members. Among their many achievements were the organization of the YWCA and the P.T.A., the introduction of Charlotte's first kindergarten and public health nurses, the creation of the League of Women Voters and the Domestic Relations court. The clubhouse was designed by the redoubtable C.C. Hook.



*Charlotte Woman's Club*

**14.** About two blocks beyond the church on your right, look out for the [imposing two-story, frame home](#) on your right. The first Buick south of the Mason Dixon line was driven by the man who had this house built in 1917. On his way to Charlotte from New York, Charles Campbell Coddington stopped at a drugstore in Greensboro, North Carolina, and remained there for a year to woo and wed a woman he happened to see there. He and his new wife, Marjorie, arrived together in 1909, and he made his reputation as the only Buick dealer in the Carolinas. Eight years later their dream house was built here on fashionable Morehead St, following the plan of an old house of Marjorie's ancestors in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Marjorie Coddington's tragic death in 1925 must have overshadowed her husband's triumphs of that year; he completed the Coddington building uptown and bought WBT radio station. He swapped the house for the [Duke mansion](#) in Myers Park in 1926, but the Duke family never lived here on Morehead St.



*C. C. Coddington House*

*Merge into the left lane in preparation for making a sharp left turn onto Kings Dr., which is two blocks down at the second traffic signal. Once on Kings Dr. take the first available right turn onto Baldwin St.*

## Route II: South & East Charlotte

### CHERRY

At about the same time as Latta began his Dilworth venture, others in Charlotte were also busy changing farmland into suburbia. Up until 1891 the Cherry neighborhood that you are now entering was cotton fields belonging to John and Mary Myers. An old farm road connecting their farmstead with Charlotte passed through a secluded hollow here and up a hill past a row of old abandoned slave cabins. Cherry trees lined the hill, "not wild cherries" remembered an old resident, "real cherries, they made the best pies."

The Myers' built rental housing in the hollow and provided black unskilled and semi-skilled laborers with the opportunity for home ownership and urban amenities, eventually including a park, school, store, churches, and tree-lined streets. When construction began, Cherry was a self-contained village, half a mile across the fields from the city's Second Ward.

Contrary to local myth, the Cherry neighborhood was not built in response to the development of Myers Park as a residential area for black servants, but in fact preceded its neighbor by as much as twenty years.

*Just past the stop sign at Baxter St., pause to view the Morgan School across the park on your left.*

15. Like many Charlotte schools, [Morgan School](#) was a product of the 1920s. It was also a product of racial segregation, remaining exclusively black until it was closed as an elementary school in 1968. The architect was Louis Asbury, Sr., a native Charlottean who designed several significant structures in Charlotte in the first half of the twentieth century, including [Hawthorne Lane Methodist Church](#), Myers Park Methodist Church, and the former [Mecklenburg County Courthouse](#) on E. Trade St.



*Morgan School*

*Continue on Baldwin to Luther St., and pause just before the intersection.*

**16.** To your right, the New England picture-book chapel is one of Cherry's three churches. It is now the Mt. Zion Church of God Holiness, but when it was erected in 1896 it was a [Lutheran missionary church](#). The story of the church is closely connected to its founding pastor, William Philo Phifer. Phifer was one of the first black preachers to be ordained in the Carolinas after the Civil War by the Lutheran Church. He established a large congregation in the former black community of "Brooklyn" in uptown's 2nd Ward, where a church was built in 1893. Three years later he organized the Cherry Lutheran Church and also ran a small school.



*Lutheran Church in the Cherry neighborhood*

**17.** Notice the house diagonally opposite from where you are stopped. The earliest architecture in Cherry was similar to the single-family dwellings found on tenant farms and in mill villages of the late nineteenth century. The corner house is a good example of this style. Though small for a family, this was more luxurious than many working class homes in 2nd Ward and had sufficient land for a kitchen garden. In addition to these older homes, Cherry also had many post-World War I Bungalow-style houses with their prominent roofs sweeping low over large porches.

*Turn left onto Luther St. and continue on Luther St. for several blocks until you reach the intersection with Kings Dr. Turn right at the intersection onto Kings Dr. Just after the intersection of Kings Dr. and 3rd St. notice St. Mary's Chapel on your left.*

**18.** In 1887, when the Thompson Orphanage was founded, it owned many acres of farmland along the hillside here. The orphanage itself straddled what is now Independence Blvd, and its [Gothic-style](#) chapel was built in 1892. The orphanage was supported by [St. Peter's Episcopal Church](#) at 7th and Tryon in uptown Charlotte.

George Pavell was 11 in 1929 when he arrived at the orphanage. He remembers rising at 6 a.m., doing chores, having breakfast, and walking to school. Later there would be time for football in the fields nearby: "That's where we learned agility. We had to be agile to miss what the cows had left behind." The chapel can be reserved for public functions by calling the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department.



[Thompson Orphanage Chapel](#)

*Continuing on Kings, cross 4th St., and turn right at the next traffic light onto Elizabeth Ave.*

## ELIZABETH

Elizabeth Ave. is an extension of uptown's Trade St. Back in the 1890s it was a logical place for city expansion. A month after he launched Dilworth, E.D. Latta helped to form a group of investors to develop the area; he formed the Highland Park Company which included a real estate developer, Walter S. Alexander, and a businessman, Walter Brem, whose house we saw in Dilworth. The name of this development company is significant, and it illustrates the connection between Charlotte's real estate development and textile industry, for the Highland Park Company was closely related to the [Highland Park cotton mill](#) of North Charlotte.

Initially the venture experienced the same slow start and consumer resistance that threatened [Dilworth](#). However, in 1897 Walter Alexander decided that the company

should donate a large block of land at the top of the hill to attract a Lutheran women's college that was seeking a location. The college came to be called [Elizabeth](#) after the wife of its sponsor, and the scheme proved to be the boost that the neighborhood needed. By 1903, Latta had extended the E. Trade St. trolley line up the new boulevard, and many Charlotte business leaders chose to live in the luxurious dwellings on "Elizabeth Hill" where they could benefit from the genteel cultural pursuits of the college. Only a handful of these houses survive today. Central Piedmont Community College which located here in the 1960s in the buildings of the former Central High School now dominates the avenue.



*Elizabeth College*

19. However, the [Richard C. Biberstein House](#) at 1600 Elizabeth Ave. gives some idea of the character of the old neighborhood. Notice how the style of this house is similar to that of the first phase of building in Dilworth. Richard C. Biberstein was an engineer and designer of industrial buildings, mainly cotton mills. The house was built in 1905. His papers are in the UNCC Library.



*The Richard C. Biberstein House*

*At the junction at the top of hill between Elizabeth and Hawthorne, turn left onto Hawthorne Lane.*

20. Presbyterian Hospital now occupies the site of [Elizabeth College](#). The college moved to Salem, Virginia, in 1915, and two years later its buildings were adapted as a hospital. Presbyterian Hospital moved here from its uptown location on W. Trade at Mint St. where it had operated since 1903. The old college building served the hospital until its demolition in 1980.

21. To the immediate left of the hospital on your right is the [grand mansion](#) built by William Henry Belk, the founder of Belk's department stores. When he came to Charlotte to open a store in 1895, he was already a successful businessman, having operated a store in Monroe with his brother. An advertisement for the original Trade St. store gives us a flavor of Charlotte at the turn of the century: "Catch the first train. Hitch up your beast or come at a run if you expect to keep up with the crowds flocking to Belk Brothers--Cheapest Store on Earth."



*Belk Mansion*

William Belk was not one to squander money. He slept in a room over his shop and remained a bachelor until he was 52 years old, only then moving to this mansion in Elizabeth to rear his family. An ardent Presbyterian, he helped to finance the move of Presbyterian Hospital to the site of Elizabeth College. He and his family originally lived in the old president's house close by, but they had this mansion overlooking the city constructed in 1924. The Belks chose C.C. Hook to design their [Neoclassical house](#) which is executed in beige brick and stone.

*Just across 5th St. notice the church on your right.*

22. St. John's Baptist Church makes an impressive sight as it stands on the corner of 5th and Hawthorne. Its architect, J.M. McMichael, intended that impact. "A church building should not hide its light under a bushel but rather should be built as a lamp set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid." McMichael chose cream colored brick and limestone as the materials for this "Roman [Ionic](#)" design. When he built the church in 1925, McMichael had already established his reputation as a church architect in Charlotte, having designed [First Baptist Church](#) (now Spirit Square), [Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church](#) (now the Afro-American Cultural Center), and the Tabernacle A.R.P. Church on Trade St. Note the six, two-story, Ionic columns with characteristic spiral scroll molding on the capitals.



*St. John's Baptist Church*

23. Another department store owner, James L. Staten, resided in the mansion on your right immediately beyond St. John's Church. He had this elegant [Neoclassical](#) house built in 1911. Today this gracious building acts as the headquarters of International House, a non-profit organization which assists internationals in adjusting to life in the United States and facilitates interaction between Americans and internationals.

*At the junction of Hawthorne Lane and 7th St., notice Independence Park.*

**24.** The Elizabeth neighborhood continued to expand. Subsequent development companies bought adjacent farms and commenced building. To attract customers, several companies donated land which was landscaped as Charlotte's first public park, and proudly christened in 1906 with the name [Independence Park](#). Only a small part of the park remains today, since much of it was sacrificed to build Independence Blvd. in 1949, but in its heyday it provided locals with tennis courts, a rose garden, and landscaped lawns. The landscaping was the first Charlotte project of the Harvard-trained [John Nolen](#). It was a lucky commission for Nolen, since it introduced him to George Stephens who was to employ him seven years later to design and landscape his Myers Park suburb.

*Cross 7th St. and turn right at the next junction onto 8th St. Stop to view the first [house](#) on your left.*

**25.** This was Harry Golden's last Charlotte residence before his death in 1981. When he arrived in Charlotte in 1941, he brought with him a strong sense of his New York Jewish immigrant background. This was reflected in his witty and controversial bi-monthly newspaper, the *Carolina Israelite*. During the late 1950s and 1960s he gained national acclaim as one of the great liberal voices in favor of racial integration. He is perhaps best remembered for his "Golden Vertical Plan Of Integration." He sardonically pointed out that since the South's blacks and whites managed quite well at grocery counters, bank teller windows, and other places where they were not required to sit down together, then perhaps seats should be removed from schools, buses, theaters, and restaurants to assist integration in those places!



*Moore-Golden House*

*Continue on 8th St. Cross Lamar and pull to the curb.*

26. To your left is one of three buildings erected in this area to house members of the Alexander family. The Alexanders moved to Charlotte from Union County, North Carolina, after the Civil War, and quickly made a name for themselves in the city. During the 1890s, they became involved in real estate development, Walter S. Alexander controlling the Highland Park Company which developed Elizabeth Avenue. In 1904, his brother John and son Walter developed this area of Elizabeth, and John bought a whole block of land here for family houses two years later. In 1913, he built his own house on the corner of Clement and 8th St.

This duplex was built by his sister Jennie in 1921. J.M. McMichael was hired as the architect, and the popular new Bungalow style was chosen. The Bungalow first gained popularity in California during the 1890s, where its modest simplicity challenged the ostentation and complexity of late Victorian dwellings. It was not until the building boom of the 1910s and 1920s that the Bungalow became one of the predominant styles in Charlotte. It was particularly well suited to smaller middle class homes, but it could also be adapted to grand proportions. Bungalows are distinguished by their prominent roof, with wide eaves sweeping over a large porch supported by squat columns. They often have dormer windows, shingled walls, and plain rustic decoration, such as stone chimneys. The overall effect is intended to be functional, and unnecessary decoration is avoided.



*Jennie Alexander Duplex*

***Continue on 8th St. Turn left onto Clement and pause to view the first two houses on your left.***

**27.** You will notice that Clement Ave. is unusually wide in comparison with its neighbors. The reason is that it was originally intended as a grand boulevard for a streetcar line from 7th St. to Central. The line, however, was never built which has preserved Clement as a quiet neighborhood street.

John Baxter Alexander built [his house](#) on the corner in 1913 and his nephew Walter virtually copied the design with the [house he built](#) next door in 1915. Both houses display features of the Bungalow style: wood shingle siding, rustic stone trim, large porches, dormers and broad eaves with brackets, although the earlier house still retains some classical influences.



*The John Baxter Alexander House*

***Continue on Clement Ave. Pass 9th St. and turn right onto Bay St. Turn left at the intersection with Pecan and cross the Seaboard Coastline Railway. Continue on Pecan across Independence Blvd. At the T-junction with Central Ave., turn right.***

**28.** Notice the old gas station facing you at this intersection. When it was first erected by the Pure Oil Company in 1936 its homely cottage style was intended to blend in with the neighborhood dwellings. This is clearly not the case with the 1951 Dairy Queen across Pecan to the left.



*Pure Oil Gas Station*



*Dairy Queen*

***Turn left onto the Plaza at the traffic lights.***

**29.** The commercial center in the vicinity of this intersection flourished during the 1920s. It is interesting to note that the main boulevards, with a streetcar line running down the center median, used to unite neighborhoods, whereas today, in the age of the automobile, they have become the divisions between neighborhoods. Thus, before Independence Boulevard was built, Elizabeth residents would have considered this to

be their local shopping area, too. Among the many landmarks near this junction is the first grocery store that W.T. Harris opened in 1936, the predecessor of the Harris Teeter supermarket chain that we have today.

## **PLAZA-MIDWOOD**

Following the success of the new streetcar suburbs in the 1900s, speculators began to buy up any land which had potential for suburban development. This area, now known as Plaza-Midwood, grew in piecemeal fashion between 1910 and the 1950s and includes at least ten subdivisions. Its early development was hampered by the difficulties of getting an efficient streetcar connection to uptown Charlotte. Because the busy Seaboard Railway line crossed the area's major artery, Central Avenue, passengers had to transfer at the railroad crossing on Central to a separate trolley line. Also, the city refused to grant Edward Dilworth Latta permission to extend his trolley line into the neighborhood.

More than any of the other of Charlotte's New South suburbs, Plaza-Midwood had difficulty in getting established. In the early years several developers tried the expedient of dividing lots in an attempt to attract lower income homeowners, but this was only partly successful.

Perhaps it was the locating of the Charlotte Country Club on Briar Creek in 1910 that saved the early developments from disaster. The club was originally the Mecklenburg Country Club and from its beginning membership symbolized wealth and prestige in the business world. Yet even though its golf course acted as a magnet to some, sales continued to be relatively slow. Ultimately the increasing prevalence of the automobile secured the suburb's future by freeing residents from dependence on the poor streetcar service. The result of this pattern of development is the diverse mixture of houses that you can see here along The Plaza.

Back in 1912, The Plaza was a "narrow dirt road surrounded on both sides by a large strawberry farm." Paul Chatham saw the potential for developing a new suburb. He hired Leigh Colyer, a landscape gardener, to transform the dirt road into a grand mile long boulevard with a central median for a streetcar. The original intention was to line the streets with mansions, and several of these were indeed erected between 1914 and 1916.

**30.** One of these mansions, located at 1600 The Plaza (about .3 miles from Central), is a house known as "Victoria." This is a somewhat unusual case, for the house was moved here in 1915 from its original site at Tryon and 7th St. in uptown Charlotte.

The move was fortunate, for this 1890s Victorian house thus survived the destruction of many similar houses during urban renewal and commercial expansion that took place particularly during the 1960s and 1970s.

"Victoria" is said to have been a wedding gift from R.M. Miller, who was in textiles, to his son in 1891. However, by 1915 it must have been considered too old fashioned, since Miller sold it and commissioned a replacement in the Colonial Revival style. The exuberant style of "[Victoria](#)" is typical of the [Queen Anne style](#). Note the complex roof shapes, the corner turret, fish-scale shingles, sawnwork trimmings, and the wrap-around porch. The house has been beautifully restored by Bill and Francis Gay.



[Victoria](#)

*Continue up The Plaza. Just before the traffic light at Belvedere Ave., note the large house to your right. Turn right onto Belvedere and pause close to the intersection to*

*view this house set in spacious grounds on the corner of Belvedere Ave. and The Plaza.*

**31.** In direct contrast to "Victoria" stands the very severe [Bungalow style](#) of the [VanLandingham Estate](#) or [Harwood](#), adapted here to massive proportions. Susie Harwood and Ralph VanLandingham moved here in 1914, having commissioned C.C. Hook to design a house in the latest style, one that struck out on its own instead of being a mere "revival." Susie Harwood was a "woman of rare gifts" and with a wide range of interests. She headed an Atlanta hotel, chaired the board of St. Peter's Hospital and the North Carolina Board of Approved Schools, and supervised the Red Cross canteen at Charlotte's Camp Greene during the First World War. Her husband was an affluent cotton broker and prominent citizen in the community. The magnificent grounds, originally with 65 gardens, were landscaped by Leigh Colyer, the same man who landscaped The Plaza.



*Van Landingham Estate*

**32.** The VanLandinghams' next door neighbor on The Plaza and across Belvedere was the Methodist Bishop, John Carlisle Kilgo. Kilgo moved here to the house in 1915

from Durham where he was president of Trinity College (now part of Duke University) between 1894 and 1910. His leadership there has been praised as progressive. He helped initiate a women's co-ordinate college and invited black educator Booker T. Washington to make his first speech at a white institution. Louis Asbury, Sr. designed this elegant house, whose "no-nonsense" style was said to reflect the character of its first owner.



*Bishop Kilgo House*

***Continue along Belvedere Ave. as it winds through Plaza-Midwood. This road was originally envisaged as the main drive to the Charlotte Country Club. After just over half a mile you will come to a stop sign. Turn left to continue on Belvedere Ave.***

**33.** Along this stretch of road are the more prestigious houses of the neighborhood, all in close proximity to the Country Club. Notice the last house facing Belvedere on your left (no. 3021), before you reach the stop sign at the Country Club gates. This house was built in 1951 by John Crosland Sr., the locally famous building contractor whose prolific career has been a major influence in shaping Charlotte since World War II.



*Crosland House*

**34.** Opposite the stop sign to your left is the unmistakable entrance to the Charlotte Country Club. The club was founded in 1910 as the Mecklenburg Country Club. Notice that the road name changes here to Mecklenburg Ave. The original intention was to have a trolley line running along this avenue from The Plaza and providing transport between the club and the city. However, the plan suffered from the general problem of the trolley system in this neighborhood, and anyway automobiles were rapidly replacing the position of the streetcar in such prestigious circles.



*Charlotte Country Club*

Although the area did not develop effectively for some time, the Country Club itself was a success from the outset, attracting many of the Piedmont's textile leaders, financiers, and real estate speculators. By 1931 club members were ready to replace their old farmhouse with a grand new club house designed by nationally famous architect, Aymar Embury.

Before the Club entrance was widened, Fred Laxton's house was located on the corner facing you. Laxton headed the group of businessmen responsible for developing Country Club Acres. He also helped to found WBT Radio. A chicken coop in his back yard became the location for a primitive radio transmitter in December 1920 and WBT's first program was broadcast from here! (See **Route I, no. 1**)

*Turn left onto Mecklenburg Ave. and continue on this road until you reach The Plaza again. Notice the width of the road, especially near The Plaza end and remember that this was originally intended to carry a trolley line. Turn right onto The Plaza and then almost immediately left at the T junction onto Parkwood Rd. This road used to be called Poorhouse Rd. since it was once the lane from the city to the county poorhouse. Take the first left turn at the traffic lights onto Hawthorne Lane and continue for about 2 miles, recrossing Central, Independence, and 7th. St., and passing by Presbyterian Hospital again.*

## MYERS PARK

Several miles to the south of Plaza-Midwood, yet another development plan got underway in 1911. John Springs Myers had already carved off part of his farm to create the Cherry neighborhood in 1891. His new dream was to turn the rest of his large cotton farm into an elegant suburb. He must have spent many evenings discussing the plan with his family and especially with his son-in-law, George Stephens. Stephens, who came to Charlotte after graduating from the University of North Carolina, joined the insurance firm of Walter Brem (whose house we saw in Dilworth) in 1896.



*John Springs Myers, owner of the farmland that became Myers Park*

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*George Stephens, John Myers's son-in-law who hired John Nolen to design the neighborhood.*

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A talented businessman, Stephens was able to take advantage of the excellent opportunities that turn-of-the-century Charlotte provided, and he quickly became involved in several schemes. He and Brem joined realtor F.C. Abbott and textile banker B.D. Heath in developing part of Elizabeth, and in 1901, Stephens, Abbott, and Word H. Wood set up the Southern States Trust Company (now NationsBank).

Ten years later, he founded the Stephens Company with Word Wood and A.J. Draper, and began to turn his father-in-law's dream into reality. Moved by the same fashion consciousness as E.D. Latta, the company hired a city planner to make the plans. They chose John Nolen, whose design for Independence Park had impressed Stephens a great deal. It was a good choice, for Nolen later became one of the nation's top planners with over 400 projects to his name.

Nolen's vision for Myers Park was to use the natural curves, gentle hills, and creeks to create a secluded glen cut off from the city. A major boulevard would unite the whole and provide trolley service to homes scattered along winding side roads. The results earned Myers Park national acclaim as the "finest unified subdivision south of Baltimore." To the modern visitor, the New South Neighborhoods appear to have been constructed in the midst of a forest, but in fact this was not the case. It is hard to imagine those first years when it must have been plain to new residents that they were living on former cotton fields, and it was only hard work that changed the scenery. In Myers Park that work began in 1915, when Nolen hired the landscape architect Earle Sumner Draper to turn the almost treeless farmland into a suburban park. "Willow, oak, tulip, plane, and elm" were selected to grace the sidewalks and gardens. Early buyers even had their lots landscaped free of charge. Not a man to let nature take its own time, James B. Duke insisted that large trees be planted as well, and summoned one of his estate gardeners to oversee the task.

The oldest section of Myers Park is towards the northern area that you will enter first. For some years the suburb acted as a separate incorporated town. As houses were erected, wealthy Charlotteans were lured out of the center city. The first wave came from among the executives of the eight-year old Southern Public Utilities Company (now Duke Power), and included its legendary president, James Buchanan Duke. The next wave of residents included bank presidents and real estate magnates such as George Stephens himself. Then came the textile executives such as the famous Springs family. Civic and commercial leaders also chose to locate their family houses here, including members of the families that owned the Belk, Ivey, and Efid department stores, and "Good Roads" Governor Cameron Morrison.

*After the junction with 4th St., Hawthorne becomes Queens Rd.*

35. At this intersection notice the [streetcar shelters](#) on both sides of Queens, facing onto 4th St. When the trolley line was operating, this was the site of the streetcar gateway that marked the entrance into our fourth New South suburb, Myers Park.



*Streetcar Shelter*

*Continue on Queens across 3rd St. and curve to the left and then right. At the next streetcar shelter, which is on the left hand side of the road, turn left onto Hermitage Rd. Shortly ahead, pause at the entrance to Hermitage Court on your left, which is flanked with large stone pillars.*

**36.** Hermitage Court was developed by a subcontractor, Frank Simmons, and he built his own imposing [Neoclassical house](#) here in 1913. This is on your immediate right as you face the entrance. Notice its grand semicircular portico with two-story columns. You will notice a contrast between the earlier Colonial Revival houses of Dilworth, which retained some of their Victorian features, and their later counterparts here.



*The Simmons House*

*Continue along Hermitage Rd., past Edgehill Park on your right. Pause in front of the large white house to your right.*

37. Known variously as "[Lynnwood](#)," "[White Oaks](#)," or just "the big house," this large Colonial Revival mansion is where James Buchanan Duke and his family spent several months of each year between 1919 and his death in 1925. It was one of four family houses and provided Duke with a place from which to oversee his thriving utility empire. It also gave his only daughter, Doris, the opportunity to experience southern life and society. Duke enlarged an earlier mansion built here in 1915 by one of his executives, Z. V. Taylor, so that it included 45 rooms and 12 bathrooms. He chose the architect C.C. Hook to design the additions and Earle Sumner Draper to landscape the 15-acre garden. Duke had 12 miles of pipeline laid to the Catawba River to provide a 150-foot fountain on the grounds--this in itself became known as a local wonder.



*"Lynnwood", or "White Oaks"*

Duke was already a tobacco magnate when he acquired the fledgling Catawba Power Company of Fort Mill in 1904. Building dams to harness the power of the river, his Southern Utility Company facilitated the expansion of the cotton industry in early twentieth-century Charlotte.

It was in this house, incidentally, that Duke set up the endowments which transformed Trinity College into Duke University and which benefited several other institutions including Johnson C. Smith University and Davidson College.

*Continue on Hermitage Rd. Cross Ardsley Rd.*

**38.** After crossing Ardsley Rd, notice the wooded area to your left. This was the site of J.S. Myers's front yard which he proudly planted and maintained and which inspired the name "Myers Park."

*At the next intersection, turn right onto Granville Rd. When Granville intersects Queens Road, turn right and then take the next right onto Harvard Place. Pause by 821 Harvard Place, the last house on the right hand side of the street.*

**39.** George Stephens built this [house](#) for himself in 1915. His father-in-law's 1867 country home used to stand behind, and for a time it was used as a garage and servant's quarters. The house combines [Colonial Revival](#) and Bungalow influences. Its architect, L.L. Hunter, came from nearby Huntersville, and designed other buildings in the area, including the Carnegie Library on the Johnson C. Smith University campus, which you will visit on **Route IV**.



*The Stephens House*

*At the intersection ahead, turn left onto Ardsley. (You can catch another glimpse of Lynnwood here; it is the house facing you at this intersection.) Continue down Ardsley and then turn left at the intersection with Queens Rd.*

40. Until 1938, [streetcars](#) ran down the median of the road. The *Charlotte Observer* tells an amusing story of schoolboys greasing the tracks where Queens Road dipped into the valley on this stretch. One Halloween night in the mid-1930s both tracks were greased and a little gunpowder was included in the mixture. "As the streetcar struggled vainly to get up the hill in either direction, anonymous groups lighted the gunpowder-grease mixture. The way those streaks of fire swooshed down the tracks, under the car, and up the other hill was something to behold. No damage, just a real great sight."

*Stay in the right lane and when you reach the major intersection of Queens Rd. and Providence Rd., turn right to remain on Queens Rd.*

41. Louis Asbury, Sr. designed the Myers Park Methodist Church that faces you across this intersection of Queens and Providence roads. Built in 1929, the building closely imitates Medieval [Gothic churches](#) in its cruciform shape, and by using arched stained-glass windows, and stone facing.



*Myers Park Methodist Church*

**42.** Six houses past the high-rise Carlton Condominiums, look out for the [McManaway House](#) on your right (1700 Queens Rd.). Like "Victoria" on The Plaza, this 1874 house was moved from its uptown location to the suburbs in 1916. It is a rare surviving example of the Victorian [Italianate style](#), with its bracketed cornice, tall arched windows with decorative crowns, and a shallow roof. The house has a sad history: the first two owners died when they were relatively young and at the height of their careers. The first was an immigrant and merchant, Jacob Rintels, who was a partner of Samuel Wittkowsky's in a successful uptown wholesale and retail business. Dr. Charles McManaway had the house moved from W. Trade St. to this location, but died two years later.



*The McManaway House*

***Bear to the right when the road divides shortly past the McManaway house. This is Selwyn Ave. Immediately on your right you will see the campus of Queens College.***

**43.** Stephens was no doubt copying W.S. Alexander's enterprising idea (remember Elizabeth College?) when he decided to attract Presbyterian College for Women from its uptown location to a 50-acre lot of its choice in Myers Park. He was not, however, the only suitor that Presbyterian College for Women had. Three others, including E.D. Latta, made their own offers and forced Stephens to increase his offer. Eventually he won out, and the college moved here in 1914. [John Nolen](#) laid out the plan for the college, renamed Queens College, and subsequently used the same ideas in other campus designs, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [C.C. Hook](#) designed the first five buildings: Administration, Science and Art, the Conservatory of Music, and North and South dormitories.



*Queens College*

*Turn left immediately after the college onto Wellesley and left again onto Roswell Ave. Notice the first house on the left.*

44. This is a fine example of the [Tudor Revival style](#), designed by the English born William H. Peeps for Mary P. Lethco in 1928. The Tudor Revival style was almost as popular as the Colonial Revival style in Myers Park in the 1920s and 1930s. Notice the mixture of building materials he used to create a rambling rustic effect.

*At the next intersection turn left onto Queens Rd., and at the traffic light bear right. You will now be going back down Queens Rd. where you were before.*

45. Almost opposite the Italianate McManaway house, at 1621 Queens, is [Earle Sumner Draper](#)'s own [Tudor Revival residence](#). From his beginning as on-site supervisor for John Nolen in 1915, Draper became the leading planner in the southeastern U.S. In 1933, he left Charlotte to become the chief of planning for the Tennessee Valley Authority and later acted as a director of the Federal Housing Administration. Between 1923 and 1933 he lived here with his wife, Norma, and five children. They enjoyed a typical upper middle class life-style, employing a cook, a maid, a chauffeur, and a gardener. Look for the family crest on the chimney face! After they left, local children thought that the house was haunted. Draper died in 1994 in Florida.



*The Earle Sumner Draper House*

*At the junction of Queens and Providence Rds. at the next traffic signal, go straight across. This will put you on Providence Rd.*

46. After passing the library and apartment buildings on your left, look for the [stone house](#) that's now a branch office of First Citizens Bank. This was the third house erected in Myers Park (1912) and was designed for hotel owners John and Lucille Jamison by Louis Asbury, Sr. It was built using North Carolina granite laid in a cobweb pattern. Sadly, before it was completed, Mr. Jamison was killed by a train at Mecklenburg community of Newell while out on a country drive. Mrs. Jamison, however, completed the house and the family lived there for 63 years.

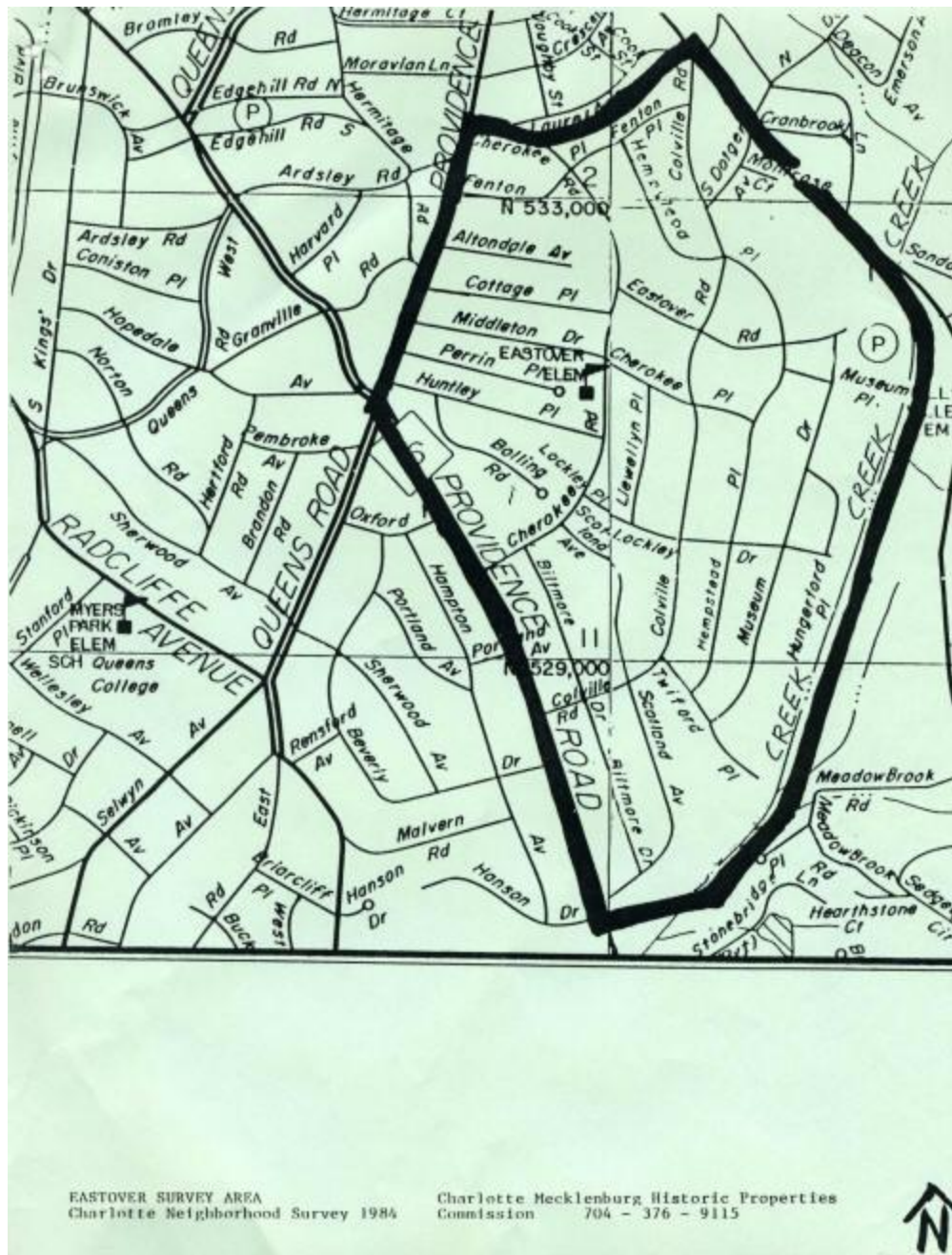


*The Jamison House*

47. To your right, look out for the Villa Square Shopping complex and try to catch a glimpse of the [unusual Tuscan Revival-style villa](#). (It is possible to park in front of the house or in the rear for a closer look.) The widowed Mrs. Blanche Reynolds met her second husband, Mr. Alexis Gourmajenko, a Russian émigré, during a tour of Europe. They had the house built in 1926 in a style which must have seemed a little eccentric for Charlotte at the time. Look for the piazzas to either side of the house, the square tower, and the low-pitched roof with roof tiles imported from Cuba. The architect was William L. Bottomley.

*Turn right at the traffic light onto Cherokee Rd., and bear to the right when the road forks shortly thereafter. Pause just past the intersection with Fenton Pl.*

## Eastover



This is Charlotte's last New South Neighborhood. Unlike the others, Eastover was designed for commuters with automobiles. Therefore, there are no grand boulevards with a street car median to unite the development. However, Eastover's creator, Edward Colville Griffith, was determined to rival Myers Park and Dilworth in their elegance. He too hired Earl Sumner Draper to lay out plans for his suburb in 1927. He also stipulated on early house deeds that there should be no "residences of Spanish architecture" since he considered the style incompatible with the historical and cultural traditions of the region.

He was obviously not fond of the Reynolds-Gourmajenko house on the edge of his new suburb!

**48.** The house on your left immediately after the junction with Fenton Place is the [Hamilton Jones House](#). E. C. Griffith would have whole-heartedly approved of this grand [Tudor-style house](#) built for Hamilton and Bessie Jones in 1929-30. The designer was Charlotte architect Martin Boyer, whom Griffith also chose as the architect for his own house just down the road. Once again, the house displays many of the dominant features of the Tudor Revival style: half-timbered gables, patterned brickwork, octagonal chimney pots, clay tile roof, and a Tudor arch capping the doorway.

Griffith would also have approved of the house's prestigious owners. Hamilton C. Jones III (nephew of John S. Myers) was a prominent attorney, jurist, civic leader, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1946 to 1952. His wife Bessie was noted for her tireless philanthropic work at the Good Samaritan Hospital, the Thompson Orphanage, and St. Peter's Episcopal Church.



*Hamilton Jones House*

***Turn left at the next intersection onto Eastover Rd. Stop near the first house on your left. (no. 201)***

**49.** This rather conservative Colonial Revival house was Griffith's own home. It was intended to set the tone for the neighborhood when it was built in 1929. By the late 1920s, Griffith was an experienced developer. His first project had been a subdivision of Myers Park, and this was followed by other projects, including part of Elizabeth. His earlier developments had followed inexpensive grid plans with modest lots, but Eastover was designed to follow the natural contours and make use of undulating topography.



*E. C. Griffith's house in Eastover*

**50.** At the other end of the block, just before the intersection with Colville Road, pronounced "Callville," notice the house on the right. This is one house that breaks with the dominant patterns of Colonial or Tudor Revival styles in Eastover. The Herman Horton house is built in what is called the Florida style. Horton started one of Charlotte's first trucking companies in 1917, and helped to make Charlotte a national trucking center.

***Cross Colville and continue to the junction with Hempstead Road.***

**51.** Ahead of you is the first branch of the [U.S. Mint](#). The building was transported here in pieces from its original location Uptown and reconstructed under the guidance of Martin Boyer< who had marked every stone before its demolition. The Griffith Company donated the site, the Civil Works Administration, one of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Agencies, provided labor, and local supporters made sacrifices in order to resurrect the building as the Mint Museum of Art< in 1936. It was one of Charlotte's early acts of historic preservation.

The building is a reminder of a period of local history which is often forgotten. During the early nineteenth century, Charlotte was at the hub of the

country's first Gold Rush; during its heyday, mining was carried out within a mile of Uptown Charlotte and throughout Mecklenburg and surrounding counties. Charlotte became a significant trading center during this period, and requested a branch mint to assay gold and produce coins. After five years of debate, Congress at last granted the request to what it considered to be an insignificant little town. By 1837, the building stood proudly on W. Trade St., a local landmark. Although mining declined soon afterwards, the mint continued to operate until the Civil War. The building, a classic example of the [Greek Revival style](#), was designed by William Strickland, the noted Philadelphia architect.

Today the Mint houses galleries of American, European, and Pre-Columbian Art. For information call (704) 337-2000.

The entrance to the museum is now off of Randolph Rd. To get there, return to Colville Rd. and turn right. At the traffic lights, turn a very sharp right onto Randolph Rd. The museum entrance is on your right at the bottom of the hill.



*The Mint Museum of Art*

***This completes the tour of the New South Neighborhoods.***

*To return to Charlotte or I-77, return to Colville Rd. and turn right. At the traffic lights, make a very shallow left turn onto Randolph Rd. This will eventually become 4th St. Continue straight to return to the city center. For I-77, follow signs for I-277. You will pass under the overpass after Independence Blvd, and turn left at the lights. This will get you on I-277 which merges with I-77 North and South.*