

Charlotte & Mecklenburg County for the Visitor

From the I 77 Welcome Center, take Exit 3 for Arrowood Rd. and turn right. From Charlotte, take I- 77 South and take Exit 3 for Arrowood Rd. and turn left. From Arrowood Rd. turn right at the traffic lights onto Nations Ford Rd. Continue on Nations Ford Rd. until it ends at the junction with Hwy. 51. Turn left and continue into the town of Pineville.

1. PINEVILLE : Before the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad opened in 1852 **Pineville** was no more than a stagecoach stop. The railroad ensured its future as a commercial center and attracted the textile industry here in 1890, when the Dover Yarn Mill opened. The original mill has been expanded and has changed ownership several times, and it still operated until recently and was the last textile mill to close in Mecklenburg County. Most mills provided workers with rented housing, which was often basic but better than the homes the workers had lived in before coming to work in the mill. The Pineville mill village, which is immediately south of the commercial district, is one of the best preserved mill villages in the county. The rural character of early mill workers was reflected in the use of all available land for growing food. Get out of your car and visit the antique shops and other stores in Pineville.

Drive through Pineville and turn right at the traffic lights at the intersection of Hwy 51 and Hwy 521. The Polk Museum is .5 miles further on your left.

2. JAMES K. POLK BIRTHPLACE MEMORIAL: This site contains reconstructed buildings that mark the 1795 birthplace of 11th U.S. **President James K. Polk**, who won the White House in 1844 with the slogan "Fifty-Four Forty or Fight." Log house and log outbuildings, visitors center, exhibits and film of the life and times of President Polk and life on the Carolina frontier are available. Guided tours. Free admission. Operated by North Carolina Department of Archives and History as a N.C. Historic Site. For information, phone (704) 889-7145.



Polk Memorial

On leaving the Polk Museum, turn right onto Hwy 521, and then left onto Hwy 51. Drive back through Pineville. Continue on Hwy 51, and follow signs for I- 77. Head north on I-77 and then take Exit 9 for Wilkinson Blvd. West. After you pass the junction with Morehead St. look out for Monument St. on your right. Turn right and stop in front of the first house on your left.

3. JAMES C. DOWD HOUSE: This sturdy, Victorian farmhouse, built by **J. C. Dowd** in 1879, commanded a fine view from its high knoll west of Charlotte. As headquarters in 1917-18 for World War army training camp, **Camp Greene**, it overlooked the sprawling 2,600 acre site where 60,000 men trained before shipping out to Europe as Allied troops. Open by appointment only. For information, phone (704) 398-2260.



Dowd House

Return to Wilkinson Blvd. and make a U-turn at the next intersection to head east on Wilkinson Blvd. Follow the signs for I-77 North. From I-77 North, take Exit 10B for Trade St. Turn left onto Trade St. and drive up the hill to a five-way junction. Take a very shallow right turn onto Beatties Ford Rd. Johnson C. Smith University is on your right. The campus is best seen on foot; please inform the guard of the purpose of your visit.

4. JOHNSON C. SMITH UNIVERSITY: Historic campus founded in Charlotte in 1867 for black students. Moved to this site during the early 1870s. Original buildings include [Biddle Hall](#), the fine Romanesque revival centerpiece of the campus built in 1884 ; and [Carter Hall](#) a Victorian Gothic building erected by students in 1895. The campus also has an original [Carnegie Library](#) built in 1912 with funds from the Andrew Carnegie foundation. You may drive onto campus to view the buildings. For further information phone (704) 376-1000.



LEFT: [Biddle Hall](#), **RIGHT:** [Carnegie Library](#)

Turn left out of the campus and return to Trade St. Follow Trade St. towards the center of Charlotte. Just after Poplar St. you will see First Presbyterian Church on your left.

5. [FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH](#): Charlotte's first church was not organized until 1815, when the town purchased land here and constructed an interdenominational church. The Presbyterians paid off the existing loan and took control of the church in 1845. They built a Victorian [Gothic](#) structure here in 1857, but only the front entrance remains of this early building. During the Civil War the steeple of **First Presbyterian Church** was hidden to save it from being melted down for guns and bullets. A new steeple was built in 1884. The present sanctuary was constructed in 1895. Behind the church is [Settler's Cemetery](#), with graves dating from the 1770's.



First Presbyterian Church

Continue on Trade St. for another block until you reach the junction of Trade and Tryon Streets which is the center of Charlotte.

6. CROSSROADS OF TRADE AND TRYON: Thomas Polk made his home here at the crossroads of two ancient Indian trading paths in 1755. His energy and leadership led to the choice of Charlotte as Mecklenburg's county seat; the town of Charlotte was incorporated in 1768. Charlotte's courthouse sat in the middle of the crossroads until 1845. According to local legend, here on May 20th, 1775 the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence was proclaimed from the courthouse steps. During the Revolutionary War this was the scene of the **Battle of Charlotte**, when a small band of armed patriots concealed themselves beneath the courthouse and behind rock walls and held British General Charles Cornwallis's 2000 troops and cavalry briefly at bay.

Continue on Trade St. for six blocks. On your right look out for the Charlotte City Hall and Old Courthouse.

7. CITY HALL AND OLD COURTHOUSE: This civic plaza was created during the 1920s and represented a move away from the center of the city for local government. Charlotte's noted architect **C.C. Hook** designed City Hall along Neo Classical lines in 1925. To the front of the building the war memorial features a cannon cast in 1769, a Confederate marker, and statues of First World War soldiers trained in Charlotte's Camp Greene 1917-1918. The courthouse next door was erected in 1928; the architect, **Louis Asbury, Sr.**, designed it to complement the City Hall.



Old Mecklenburg County Courthouse

After the courthouse, turn left onto McDowell St. After three blocks turn left onto 7th St. The Afro-American Cultural Center is one block farther on your right.

8. AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER: Art gallery, theater, classes, exhibits, resource and research of Charlotte's black heritage are presented in this historic edifice built as [Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church](#) in 1911. Church was designed by **James McMichael**, influential regional architect. For information, phone (704) 374-1565.



Little Rock AME Zion Church

Continue on 7th St. Recross Tryon St. and take the next left onto Church St. Look for the brick building on the opposite side of the next intersection.

9. [NORTH CAROLINA MEDICAL COLLEGE BUILDING](#): This building opened in October, 1907, as the home of the **North Carolina Medical College**, which had been established in the northern Mecklenburg County town of Davidson in 1893. 732 students attended the college, and 340 Doctor of Medicine degrees were awarded before it closed in 1914. The architect was James McMichael, the designer of the Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church.

Continue on Church St. approximately two blocks to Trade St. Turn right and follow the signs for I-77 North. From I-77 North, take Exit 16B for Sunset Rd. West. At the junction with Beatties Ford Rd., turn right. Continue on Beatties Ford Rd and follow the signs for Latta Plantation Park. Hopewell Presbyterian Church is on your right opposite the entrance to Latta Plantation Park.

10. **HOPEWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH:**



One of the seven original Presbyterian churches in the county. Congregation organized ca. 1760 in an area which became dominated by tight knit plantation families. By 1840 this was the richest church in the area. The brick sanctuary is at least the third building on the site. It was built in 1833 and extended in 1860. The plain style is typical of meeting house architecture. The interior of **Hopewell Presbyterian Church** is still much the way it was in 1860. Notice the gallery, which would have been used by slaves originally. Local Revolutionary War hero, General William Lee Davidson, is buried in the graveyard.

To get to Latta Plantation Park, turn down Sample Rd. that intersects Beatties Ford Rd. across from Hopewell Church.

11. **LATTA PLACE:** Catawba River plantation house of merchant **James Latta**, built circa 1800. Two-story frame Georgian/Federal transitional style. Furnished house museum with barn, smokehouse, animals. Kitchen garden, cotton field in season. For information, phone (704) 875-2312.



Latta Place

Return to Beatties Ford Rd. and turn left. Turn right onto Hambright Rd. and then left onto McCoy Rd. Oak Lawn is about one mile farther on your left.

- OAK LAWN**: Oak Lawn is the Federal style plantation house erected ca. 1820 for Benjamin Davidson and Betsy Latta. Both were the descendants of pioneer Mecklenburg planters. A mile long avenue of oaks and cedars used to mark the entrance.

Continue on McCoy Rd. Turn left at the next junction onto Gilead Rd. After 1.2 miles you will see Cedar Grove on your right.

- CEDAR GROVE / TORANCE HOUSE AND STORE**: Cedar Grove is the finest ante-bellum mansion in the county. The impressive brick Greek Revival style house was built between 1831 and 1833 as a plantation home for **James G. Torance**. On the same site is the **Torance House and Store**, the original log home of James's father, Hugh Torrance. It was built ca. 1779 and later extended to include a four room frame addition. In ca. 1805 a store was built on to the east side of the original log house. This is now the oldest store building in the county. It is open to the public, Sun. 2-5pm. Nominal admission.



LEFT: *Cedar Grove*, **RIGHT:** *Torance Store*

Continue on Gilead Rd. for one mile and then turn left onto Bud Henderson Rd. After almost one mile you will see Ingleside on your right.

14. INGLESIDE: Scottish for "fireside." **Ingleside** was built by **Dr. William Davidson**, a prominent physician and planter. His ancestors were among the most successful local pioneer families. Ingleside was built just after the Civil War and is the finest surviving example of the Italianate Style in the county.

Continue on Bud Henderson Rd. to the junction with Beatties Ford Rd. Turn right, and after one mile, you will pass a Victorian farm house on your left.

15. J. M. ALEXANDER HOUSE: The **J. M. Alexander House** is a good example of Victorian vernacular architecture in the county. It was built by **John Alexander** between 1873 and 1874. He was a local "jack of all trades," who ran a

cotton farm and gin as well as a blacksmith's shop and sawmill. Notice the sunburst motif on the front gable and the sawnwork brackets on the eaves.

Follow Beatties Ford Rd. to the intersection with Hwy 73. Turn right and follow Hwy 73 along the side of Lake Norman and then into Cornelius. In Cornelius, turn left onto Hwy 115 and drive into Davidson.

16. DAVIDSON COLLEGE AND TOWN: Davidson College was founded in 1837 and dedicated to Revolutionary War hero General. William Lee Davidson. Original college layout and buildings were influenced by Jeffersonian tradition. Note two Greek Revival student debating halls, [Philanthropic Hall](#) and [Eumenean Hall](#), built 1848. Also two early dormitories, [Elm and Oak Rows](#). The charming town maintains many nineteenth century homes and stores. Tours of collage, arboretum and town are available from the Visitor's Center, located in the Copeland House, 305 N. Main St. Open Mon. - Fri., 9:00am. - 4:00pm. For further information phone (704) 892-2477.



Philanthropic & Eumenean Halls



Elm and Oak Rows

To return to I-77 and Charlotte, drive north on Main St. and turn left onto Griffen Rd. This will take you to I-77. Take I-77 south to Charlotte.