



## SEABOARD AIR LINE RAILROAD PASSENGER TERMINAL



*This report was written on September 5, 1979*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Passenger Terminal is located at 1000 N. Tryon St. in Charlotte, N. C.

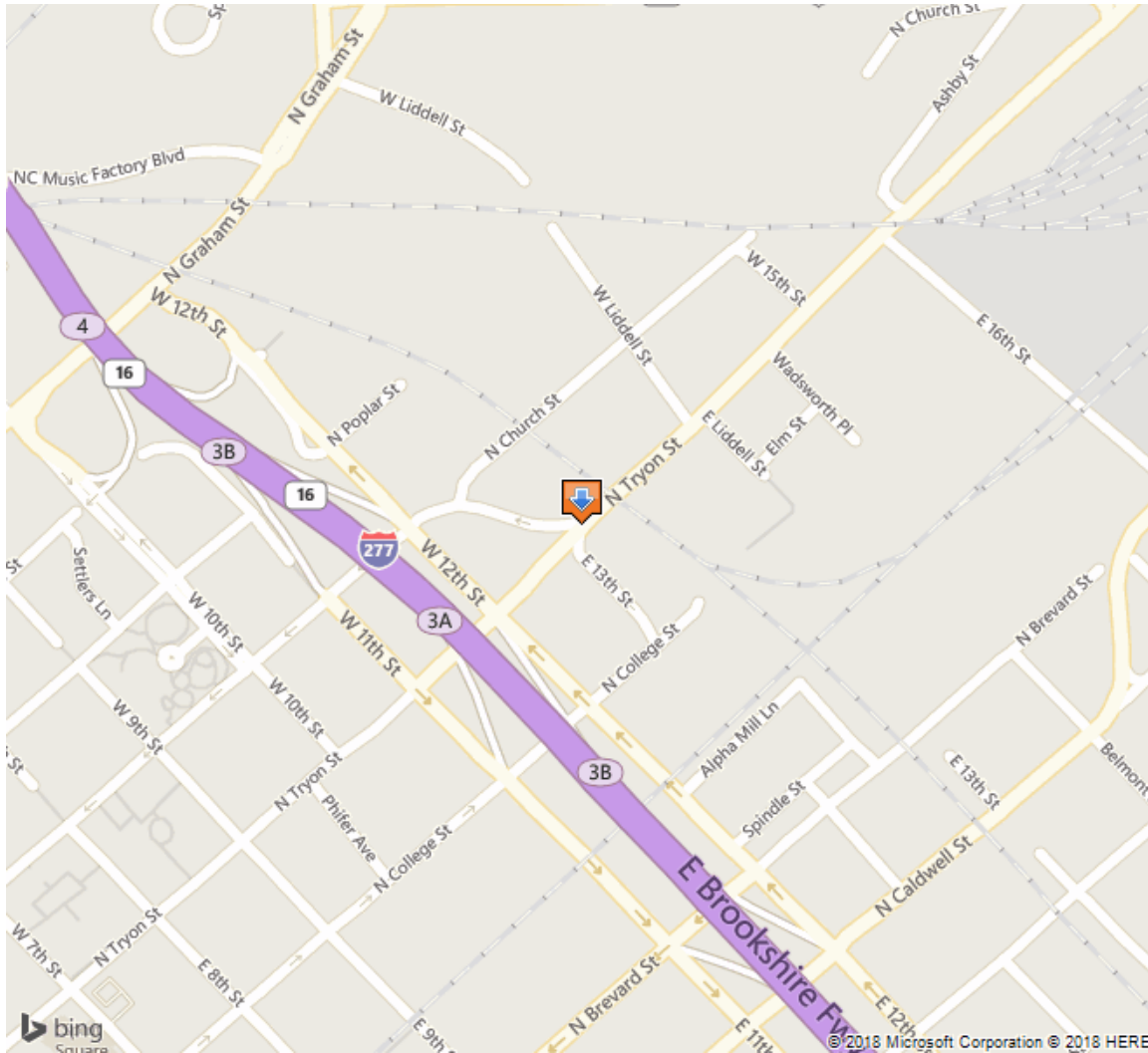
**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner and occupant of the property:** The present owner of the property is:

The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad Co.  
3600 W. Broad St.  
Richmond, Va. 23219

Telephone: (804) 359 6911

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent deed on this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 7 at Page 232. There is no individual Tax Parcel Number assigned to this property.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

The initial railroad passenger terminal on this site was built in 1858 by the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherfordton Railroad Company. <sup>1</sup> It served as the eastern terminus of a thirty one mile line from Charlotte to Lincolnton, which was completed by April 1861. On May 17, 1873, the Carolina Central Railroad Company acquired the right of way and undertook the task of completing a continuous track from Wilmington, N.C., to Rutherfordton, N.C. This job was completed on December 15, 1874. The terminal on N. Tryon St. now provided access to the major east-west passenger line in Charlotte. On August 1, 1893, the Carolina Central joined with several other railroads in forming the Seaboard Air Line. <sup>2</sup> Soon thereafter, major

improvements were performed at the Charlotte terminal. A ticket office and waiting rooms were added.<sup>3</sup>

The initial passenger terminal, a narrow two story structure with a tin roof, was destroyed by fire on the night of February 11, 1895.<sup>4</sup> As a temporary measure, the Seaboard Airline enclosed the passenger sheds for use as an interim facility.<sup>5</sup> From the outset, the company planned to build a new and more imposing edifice. "The arrangements at the depot at present do well enough for summer", *The Charlotte Observer* reported, "but for winter quarters are no good."<sup>6</sup> On July 28, 1895, the local press announced that the architect of the new terminal would be Charles Christian Hook.<sup>7</sup>

C. C. Hook (1870-1938) was the first architect to live in Charlotte, N.C. A native of Wheeling, WV, and graduate of Washington University, he moved to this community in 1891 to teach in the Charlotte Graded School, which was located at the corner of South Blvd. and E. Morehead St.<sup>8</sup> Most of his early commissions were for structures in Dilworth, the streetcar suburb which the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, locally known as the Four C's, opened on May 20, 1891.<sup>9</sup> Among the significant edifices which he designed during his career were the Charlotte City Hall, the clubhouse of the Charlotte Woman's Club and White Oaks or the James B. Duke Mansion on Hermitage Rd.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, C. C. Hook occupied a place of preeminent importance in the architectural history of Charlotte.

Construction of the new passenger depot began in December 1895.<sup>11</sup> The Seaboard Air Line opened the terminal on June 16, 1896.<sup>12</sup> It was a two story brick structure, 40 feet wide and 120 feet long.<sup>13</sup> *The Charlotte Observer* commented upon the opening of the facility.

The new building is two stories high, is of brick and altogether a credit to the road and City.<sup>14</sup>

The terminal was built by W. C. Williams, a local contractor.<sup>15</sup>

One of the most dramatic events associated with the Seaboard Air Line Passenger Station occurred on May 2, 1898. A throng of local citizens gathered there to bid farewell to approximately two hundred men who were departing for service in the Spanish American War. A procession, headed by Confederate veterans, marched from Independence Square to the terminal through a "solid phalanx of humanity." "Yards and houses were decorated with flags, and from thousands of throats went up cheer after cheer", *The Charlotte Observer* reported. When the train arrived from Shelby,

N.C., the Charlotte troops, belonging to either the Hornets' Nest Rifles or the Queen City Guards, fired a howitzer in salute to the soldiers aboard. *The Charlotte Observer* was expansive in describing what followed.

...farewells were said, and the soldiers boarded the train, many of them laden with flowers. Tears fell from the eyes of mothers, sisters and sweethearts. To them it was a sad occasion.<sup>16</sup>

A major renovation of the Seaboard Air Line Passenger Terminal occurred in 1916-17. A building permit for the project was issued on August 7, 1916, and the station opened on January 31, 1917. Plans for the renovated structure were prepared by Seaboard officials. A. M. Walkup, Inc., of Richmond, Va., erected the edifice. It is important to note that Hook's 1896 terminal constituted the mayor portion of the new station. The cost of the renovation and enlargement of the Charlotte terminal was \$22,000.<sup>17</sup>

The advent of the "automobile era" eroded the popularity of trains as a means of inter-city transportation. The last train from Charlotte to Rutherfordton departed in December 1950. The final train traveling eastward left the station on November 3, 1958. Thereafter, the structure served as a yard office for the Seaboard Air Line, later Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. It continues in that capacity.<sup>18</sup>

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#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> "Charlotte. Railroads Seaboard, a folder in the vertical files of the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library. Hereafter cited as Seaboard. *Daily Charlotte Observer* (February 12, 1895), p. 4. The term "The Charlotte Observer" this report, although the newspaper appeared under various titles.

<sup>2</sup> Seaboard.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (February 12, 1895), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (February 14, 1895), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (November 23, 1895), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (July 28, 1895), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *The Charlotte News* (September 17, 1938), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> *The Charlotte News* (May 20, 1891), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Jack O. Boyte & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on Lynnwood for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission". (January 5, 1977); Jack O. Boyte & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on the Mecklenburg County Courthouse for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission", (April 5, 1977); Ruth Little-Stokes & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on the Clubhouse of the Charlotte Woman's Club", (April 1, 1978).

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (Nov. 23, 1895), p. 4; January 1, 1896), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (June 17, 1896), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (July 28, 1895), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (June 17, 1896), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (March 12, 1896), p.4.

<sup>16</sup> *Daily Charlotte Observer* (May 3, 1898), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Sally McMillen, "The Seaboard Passenger Station", an unpublished manuscript in the vertical files of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, more specifically in the Carolina Room.

<sup>18</sup> Seaboard.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description of the property prepared by Caroline Mesrobian, architectural historian.

**8. Documentation of way and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in NCGS 160A-399.4:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Passenger Terminal does possess special historic significance in terms of Charlotte Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) it is the only pre 1900 railroad passenger terminal which survives in Charlotte, N.C. and 2) the original portions of the building were designed by C. C. Hook, Charlotte's first architect.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission judges that the architectural description included herein demonstrates that the property known as the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Passenger Terminal meets this criterion. Indeed, the 1916 terminal is essentially intact, except for extensive renovations on the first floor of the terminal.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes historic property. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad Passenger Terminal is not listed individually in the records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office. Consequently, it is impossible to determine therefrom the Ad Valorem tax appraisal on this parcel.

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#### Bibliography

Jack O. Boyte & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on Lynnwood for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission." (January 5, 1977).

Jack O. Boyte & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on the Mecklenburg County Courthouse for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission " (April 5, 1977).

*The Charlotte News.*

"Charlotte. Railroads Seaboard", a folder in the vertical files of the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public library.

*Daily Charlotte Observer.*

Ruth Little Stokes & Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report on the Clubhouse of the Charlotte Woman's Club", (April 1, 1978).

Sally McMillen, "The Seaboard Passenger Station," an unpublished manuscript in the vertical files of the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** September 5, 1979.

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission  
139 Middleton Dr.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: (704) 332 2726

**Special Note:** For a photograph of the 1896 terminal, see *Sketches of Charlotte No. 3* (Wade H. Harris Publisher, Charlotte, N. C., 1899), p. 14. A copy is located in the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library.

### ***Architectural Description***

The Seaboard Passenger Station, located at 1000 North Tryon Street, stands on the cul de sac of East 13th Street. The depot's northeast facade faces the railroad tracks, while its northwest side overlooks Tryon Street. The southwest side is bounded by the termination of East 13th Street and a concrete retaining wall erected in 1917; the southeast facade overlooks the street and an ample parking area.

The two story, pink stucco station is characterized by a continuous umbrella shed which, in addition, extends along the tracks 59 feet from the end of the building on the north west side, and 104 feet on the southeast side. A sign bearing the words "Charlotte, N.C." is attached to the southeast extension facing the entrance to the yard.

Examination of the station shows there have been two distinct building periods of the present edifice; the central two story portion being constructed first, with the one story additions on the northwest and southeast sides being erected at a later period.

Newspaper accounts in 1895 relate that an enclosed shed was to be replaced by a two story building, 40 feet by 120 feet, and set about 35 feet from the tracks. The architect was Charles C. Hook. <sup>1</sup> The brick structure with trimmings of brown stone was occupied on June 16, 1896. <sup>2</sup>

The Sanborn Insurance Map of 1900 shows a rectangular building, its northeast side having contained a bayed area placed northwest of the center of that facade. A rectangular projection on the southeast facade corresponded in placement to the bay on the northeast facade, while another rectangular area projected from the central portion of the northwest side. A wide shed extended around all sides excepting the southeast; the southwest gallery also contained a centrally located porte cochere.

A small photograph <sup>3</sup> showing men boarding the Seaboard Air Line for the Spanish American War in 1898 includes a view of the southeast side of the station. The depot consisted of a two story building with a one story structure extending from the southeast end. Both structures were of brick and had slate tripped roofs. Each facade contained two bays with rectangular double hung 1/1 windows forming both the exposed upper story of the main building and the one story section. The porte cochere extending from the southwest facade was also present. The Sanborn Insurance Map could not show, however, that the polygonal bay on the northeast side was turreted, a typical Victorian feature. A slight projection of the roofline on the southwest side indicates that the rectangular projection also had its own roof. Correspondingly, the northwest facade may have had a similar arrangement.

The Sanborn Insurance Map shows that the main floor was devoted to two waiting rooms with a ticket office located in between them; the baggage room was on the southeast end of the depot. Newspaper accounts describe the plans for the 1895-96 depot. The waiting room on the Tryon Street was for Whites; its dimensions being 27 by 29 feet. The ladies' toilet room opened onto it from the west side, facing Tryon Street. A hallway and the ticket office were located in the center of the building between the White and Colored waiting rooms, the latter being 16 by 27 feet, on the east side of the ticket office, and it also contains toilet facilities. The baggage room, 12 by 27 feet, was adjacent to the Colored waiting room. A staircase located in the hall in the center of the station rose to a hall of similar dimensions to the first floor. Rooms on this floor were largely for the railroad's use: an office and engineers' dormitory, each 15 by 28 feet; conductors' and train master's rooms, each 15 by 12 feet; telegraph room, 13 by 15 feet; and convenience areas.



Discussion of the proposed enlargement and remodeling of the station began in January 1916. The plans were drafted by Seaboard architects in the main office in Norfolk, Virginia. Contracting was awarded to the A. M. Walkup Company of Richmond, Virginia; two oval metal plaques on the northeast side of the depot bear the inscription "A. M. Walkup, Richmond, Va. 1916." Newspaper accounts related that the side walls of the present station were to be retained and employed in the remodeling. The end walls were to be torn out and the building extended. When the passenger station officially reopened on January 31, 1917, a temporary depot structure adjacent to Tryon Street was demolished.

Comparison of elevations for the remodeling (dated May 18, 1916) and the present station shows relatively little alteration. The track facade (northeast) is characterized by an unsymmetrical arrangement of fenestration and entranceways which reflects the various functions of the interior spaces. The central (original) section contains five bays. On the lower story the southern most bay contains a pair of rectangular windows with double hung sashes 1/1. All station windows have smooth stucco frames. The next bay contains an entrance to a waiting room with double doors each door bearing a rectangular plate of glass set in wooden frame. The doors are flanked by narrow, rectangular side lights with wooden paneling below. A transom with side lights comprises the upper section of the entrance. Sills are of granite. All entrances appear to have had screen doors at one time. A polygonal projecting bay, centrally located in this section of the facade, consists of three double hung 1/1 rectangular windows. The next bay contains a pair of double hung 1/1 windows, while the other waiting room entrance, identical to the previously mentioned entrance, marks the northernmost bay of this central section.

The second story contains the continuation of the central located bay with three double hung 1/1 windows. The 1896 turret is no longer extant. This projection is flanked on either side by two pairs of the same type windows. The original quoining in the 1896 section remains only on the second story, the lower corners having been removed.

The 1917 extensions to the two story central section are one story. It appears that the 1896 baggage room was demolished to make room for the southern oriented addition, its track side facade having two bays. The end bay contains the entrance to the baggage and freight area. Its door has been altered and was originally a double door with a two sectioned transom. The other bay is pierced by a square transom window placed relatively high in the wall, At this point there is a break in the wall indicating the transition from the original building to the annex. The north addition also contains two bays, they being formed by two pairs of windows with double hung sash, 1/1.

A 3' 11" dark red tapestry brick veneer runs around the facade as well as the other sides of the station. This brickwork was not an original feature of the 1896 structure and was added during the remodeling most likely to unify the sections of the station and to protect the pink stucco walls. The veneer's base is formed by stretchers placed on their ends, the middle section with rows of stretchers and the top with a border of two headers. The topmost headers were molded so as to join smoothly with the walls. The entire facade is finished with kellastone (pebble dash) granite stucco over a brick base. Quoining with a smooth kellastone finish was employed for the corners of the two extensions, and extends down to the brick veneer. Metal guards painted green protect all lower corners of the station.

The roofs of the central section and the extensions are tripped, have wide eaves, and are of red transite asbestos shingles laid in a diamond pattern. Roof edges are covered with pieces of turned terra cotta. The original roof had been of slate.

The most striking feature of this facade and the other side of the station is the wide umbrella shed; its structure is identical on all sides excepting the southwest. The shed is a continuation of the roofs of the 1917 extensions and projects from an area between the original building's first and second stories. The 1917 elevation shows that asbestos shingles were to be employed and that two skylights (10 by 13 feet) were to be inserted in the shed at the ends of the original building on the northeast side. The original roof of the shed, however, has been replaced with metal. Station employees relate that the shed formerly extended approximately two to three feet more toward the tracks to provide almost complete coverage from the elements. When an employee who was leaning from a train approaching the shed was scraped off, the portion was subsequently cut off. The concrete sidewalk blocks were also cut back to correspond with the altered shed.

The shed extends 300 feet on the track side of the station and is supported by fifteen cast iron columns. Five of these supports extend beyond the station to the southeast, three to the northwest. The columns are set into concrete paving blocks and have bulbous bases with straight shafts, the latter bearing the words "Greenville Iron Works, Greenville, S.C.". Wooden beams spring from three of the four cast iron brackets placed at 90 degree angles to each other. These brackets are situated approximately two thirds of the height of each support. The beams extend up to members that support the rafters and a cross beam that runs the length of the shed. The cross beam also supports a black heat conveying pipe which originates from a backside furnace shed on the southeast side of the station.

The upper section of alternating cast iron supports have openings to accommodate a drainage system. Drain pipes running from roof gutters inserted into these openings at one time; rain water was therefore directed down through the hollow shafts into a round drainage system instead of flowing over the edges of the umbrella shed.

The northwest (Tryon Street) facade contains two bays, each pierced by a rectangular double hung sash 1/1 window. Quoining is employed as well as the tapestry brick veneer. Two cast iron columns support the umbrella shed on this side. The 1896 rectangular projection was lost in the 1917 addition of this section.

The southwest (rear) facade of the station also reflects the functions of the interior spaces. The arrangement of the five bays of the central section correspond to that of the northeast side. The first story contains a similar placement of fenestration and entrances: the northernmost bay contains a double door with side lights and a transom, and a pair of rectangular double hung 1/1 windows pierce the next bay. The middle area of this section is stuccoed and does not correspond to the fenestrated polygonal bay on the northeast side. The next bay contains another entrance to a waiting room. The southernmost bay has been altered; it probably contained a pair of double hung 1/1 windows. These were replaced during the remodeling by a narrow wooden door with a single transom, as the 1916 elevation also indicates. The door provides an exterior access to the staircase which leads to the second floor, the original centrally located stair having been removed.

The second story contains five pairs of double hung 1/1 windows, and the quoining at the ends is intact.

The north extension of this facade contains three bays, two of which are pierced by single windows, double hung 1/1. The bay which connects with the original section of the station contains a set of these windows. The southern oriented extension contains two square transom windows. A rail and steps in front of this section lead to a cellar. There is a slight break in this area where the original building and the annex meet.

The brick veneer extends the length of the entire facade. The ends of the additions are quoined. An overhang supported by twelve slender brackets extends from the wall above the first story. These brackets are ornamented with finials that point downward. The 1896 rectangular projection has been removed from this facade.

A chimney is centrally located on the southeast end of the original building. Once an exterior feature it is constructed of brick and bears remnants of stucco. The southeast facade of the 1917 extension consists of a centrally located entrance flanked on either side by a single square transom window. The original wooden, double doored

entrance with single transom has been altered. Quoining, the tapestry brick base, and the umbrella shed supported by two columns also define this facade.

The functions of the rooms in the 1895 station remained the same in the 1917 addition; these spaces were enlarged and the personal facilities expanded. The 1917 ground floor plan shows the ticket agent's office in the center of the building with the 40' by 27' 2" White waiting room to the northwest. The northwest addition included a portion of the waiting room, a men's smoke room and a women's rest room, both with facilities. The 29' 3" by 27' 8" Colored waiting room was situated on the opposite side of the agent's office. The southeast addition contained an office, locker space, facilities for men and women, and a baggage room, 23' 6" by 27'. All floors are of red tile. All ceilings are of running board.

The second floor plan shows a staircase and hall which extend along the southwest side of the building, the remaining space being divided into five rooms. Floors are of wood. As with the 1896 building, this floor was maintained for railroad employees.

Both floors have been altered to meet the needs of the present function of the station as yard offices for the Seaboard; the passenger depot discontinued service to the public in 1958. The major alterations, conducted in 1966, include the partitioning of the main floor, extensive electrical work, and the knocking out of an interior wall on the second floor to form a large room in the northwest area.

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#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1895, p.4; July 28, 1895, p.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, June 17, 1896, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Wade H. Harris, *Sketches of Charlotte*, Charlotte, N.C.: Observer Printing House, 1899.

<sup>4</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, November 27, 1895, p.4.

<sup>5</sup> *Charlotte News*, January 19, 1916, p.6 ; August 7, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Charlotte News*, August 16, 1916, p.3; February 1, 1917, p.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, November 27, 1895, p.4.