Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Historic Landmarks Commission

Faires Farm Silos

9520 Faires Farm Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28213

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission
Local Landmark Designation Report

Prepared by Liz Vaagen and Tommy Warlick

December 2025

HISTORIC NAMES OF PROPERTY
Faires Farm Silos

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY
9520 Faires Farm Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28213

PIN #
05129317

DEEDS BOOK & PAGE
Book 38813, Page 952

ZONING
INST(CD)

AMOUNT OF LAND/ACREAGE TO BE DESIGNATED
A twenty-five (25) foot radius of the land immediately surrounding each structure, measured in each direction from the exterior surface of each structure.

AD VALOREM TAX APPRAISAL
The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of up to 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes depending upon the portion(s) of the property designated as the "historic landmark." As of January 2025, the total appraised value of the property on which the structures stand is $860,700. The property is currently exempt from the payment of property taxes.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DESIGNATION
The Commission recommends designation of the exterior of each of the two structures, as well as a twenty-five (25) foot radius of the land immediately surrounding each structure, measured in each direction from the exterior surface of each structure.

NAME/ADDRESS OF CURRENT PROPERTY OWNER
Iglesia Cristiana Fuente De Vida Eterna
9520 Faires Farm Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28213

DESIGNATION REPORT CONTENTS
This report includes maps and representative photographs of the property, a historical sketch of the property prepared by Liz Vaagen, a physical description of the property prepared by Tommy Warlick, and documentation as to why and how the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. § 160D-945.

I. Abstract

Statement of Significance

The two Faires Farm silos are the last known extant structures of the 330-acre Faires cattle farm, operated during the mid-twentieth century by Frank and Viola Faires in the once rural northeast quadrant of Charlotte. That area – now known as University City, due to the presence of the 1,000-acre campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and the development driven by the school – is now one of Charlotte's fastest growing areas and one of the city's primary technology and higher educational corridors.

The Faires Farm silos represent the original agrarian roots of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, as well as the necessary transition of the area's once-dominant cotton monoculture to a more resilient, diversified farming economy. The two structures also serve as prominent and powerful reminders of the city and county's evolution from a rural, agrarian community to the large, urbanized population center it is today, representing the small to large-scale development that reshaped the entire region during the twentieth century. The silos themselves were the result of a unique period during the twentieth century when collaborative relationship among diverse national, state, and local organizations proactively benefitted local citizenries and economies, including the federal government's promotion of new technologies (in this case, agricultural technologies), practical resources and educational opportunities provided by state agricultural departments and schools and county extension agents, and creative financing solutions from local banks. The construction and use of such silos allowed for the creation and storage of silage as a valuable year-round fee source, facilitating the launch of livestock farming on a large scale. These particular silos enabled Frank and Viola Faires to embark upon a farming operation that specialized in raising Charolaise beef cattle.

The two Faires Farm silos – the shorter south silo (ca. 1951), built by hand by Frank Faires, and the taller north silo (built between 1951 and 1978) – are also architecturally significant, in that they were built using two different construction techniques. The south silo evidences the use of concentric steel plates that allowed for the creation of large bands of poured concrete. The north silo resulted from the piecing together of rows of interlocking concrete staves bolstered by steel reinforcement hoops. Those methods represent the two most prominent tower silo construction techniques for much of the twentieth century. Together, the two Faires Farm silos and their close proximity (standing less than two feet apart) offer a rare and unique first-hand opportunity to compare and contrast those historic architectural practices.

Finally, the Faires Farm silos are significant for their associative history, as both Frank and Viola Faires were well-known Charlotteans throughout much of the mid-twentieth century. In addition to being a cattle farmer, Frank Faires was an energetic entrepreneur, starting with a single service station on Charlotte's South Boulevard in 1932. In 1937, he launched Faires Trailer Company, one of North Carolina's first mobile home dealerships that by 1960 was one of the South's largest mobile home businesses. Frank was widely recognized as one of the nation's top mobile home dealers. Active in a wide range of civic and community endeavors, Viola was perhaps best known as a celebrated homemaker, winning Mecklenburg County's "Homemaker of The Year" award

three years in a row (1962-1964), including an impressive haul of 127 ribbons across seven categories at the 1963 Mecklenburg Fair.

Integrity Statement

- **Location – High:** The two silos remain at their original site of construction as the last remaining structures associated with what was once the 330-acre Faires Farm cattle farm. They have not been moved, signifying their direct connection to the land where they were constructed and used for decades, and thereby retain a high degree of integrity as to location.

- **Design – High:** The silos exhibit a high degree of integrity as to design. Each silo embodies the standard cylindrical form of masonry tower silos typically to North Carolina farms of the early- to mid-twentieth century, and appear to be unchanged from their original construction. Each silo represents a different means of construction – the poured concrete south silo and the concrete stave north silo – is comprised primarily of concrete staves – and therefore a different design type, providing a rare adjacent display of the two most prominent means of silo construction during the first half of the twentieth century.

- **Setting – Medium:** Although the silos remain unaltered at their original site of construction at what was once the primary barn location for a large-scale 330-acre cattle farm, the surrounding land has since been developed into a large suburban residential community. The original rural landscape and context that once surrounded them have been largely erased, but the silos stand on a nearly four-acre lot approximately 150 feet from the only other structure on the property (a church), rendering the silos as prominent albeit isolated reminders of Mecklenburg's agricultural history. The silos therefore retain a medium degree of integrity as to setting.

- **Materials – High:** The degree of integrity as to each silo's materials remains high. The original components – including poured concrete, manufactured concrete staves, steel reinforcement hoops, and other steel and metallic components – remain intact as originally employed in the silos' construction with little appreciable deterioration or alternation.

- **Workmanship – High:** The degree of integrity as to workmanship is also high. Each silo represents a different means of construction, and the skill and quality still evidenced in the superior condition of each decades-old structure represent the high degree of technological aptitude and craftsmanship that went into their construction.

- **Feeling – Medium:** The silos stand alone as the last known extant elements of a once-thriving 330-acre farm within Charlotte's former rural and primarily agricultural corridor. However, that isolation and their towering presence over the surrounding residential developments provide a powerful testament to the agricultural industry that was critical to the city's early history and development. That rarity makes their preservation all the more critical, even as the evolution of the immediate built environment has resulted in a medium degree of integrity as to the structures' feeling.

- **Association – High:** The silos maintain a high level of integrity as to their association with the once-rural history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, the evolution of agricultural technology and its impact on farm architecture, and important Charlotte citizens of the mid-twentieth century. As physical representations of Mecklenburg County's agrarian beginnings, the silos retain an irreplaceable symbolic value as evidence of the area's shift from a one-crop system to a more diversified agricultural economy. The evolution of silo construction techniques evidenced by the two adjacent silos demonstrated that it was not only Mecklenburg County's textile and manufacturing industries that benefitted from technological advances. Finally, the silos are associated with Frank and Viola Faires, a prominent Charlotte couple throughout much of the twentieth century.

II. Maps and Chain of Title

Mecklenburg County Tax Maps

Source for images below: Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency, Polaris 3G database, https://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/.

Chain of Title

Grantor	Grantee	Date	Deed Book/Page
Romanian Baptist Church of Charlotte	Iglesia Cristiana Fuente De`Vida Eterna	05/13/2024	38813/952
CHM Holdings LLC.	Romanian Baptist Church of Charlotte	08/07/2007	22646/178
University City Knights Inc.	CHM Holdings LLC.	05/10/2004	17172/137
The Mathisen Company	University City Knights Inc.	04/09/2003	15125/560
Frank W. Faires and wife, Viola Faires*	The Mathisen Company	02/18/1986	5176/546

*Frank and Viola Faires transferred approximately 218.345 acres of land to The Mathisen Company in this transaction. For chain of title for the individual parcels that comprised that property, see deed from Mary Covington (single) to Frank W. Faires and wife Viola P. Faires, recorded in Book 2102 at Page 231 of the Mecklenburg Public Registry; deed from Viola P. Faires to Frank W. Faires recorded in Book 2209 at Page 447 of the Mecklenburg Public Registry; and deed from J. Caldwell McDonald and wife, Janet Mellon McDonald and Katherine McDonald Hays (widow) to Frank W. Faires and wife, Viola P. Faires recorded in Book 1356 at Page 151 of the Mecklenburg Public Registry. Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deeds Book 5176, Page 546-49 (1986).

III. Historical Background

The two silos located on Faires Farm Road in Mecklenburg County warrant designation as a historical landmark, because they serve as a symbol of the unique collaborative partnership among diverse national, state, and local organizations – from the federal government's promotion of new agricultural technologies to the practical guidance of county extension agents and the creative financing solutions of local banks. The silos also serve as a tangible reminder of both the transitions the county underwent in the twentieth century and the impact made by Frank and Viola Faires as entrepreneurs and dedicated community members. The silos themselves embody Mecklenburg County's pivotal shift from cotton monoculture to a more resilient, diversified farming economy. Finally, they are the last tangible reminders of the county's evolution from a rural, agrarian community to the large, urbanized population center it is today, representing the transitions from small to large-scale development that reshaped the entire region.

While modern Charlotte is an active urban center, it is important to remember the agricultural roots that shaped the community for generations. The evolution of this rural area tells a story of agricultural dominance that quickly and dramatically transitioned to urbanization. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, Mecklenburg County's history was fundamentally rural. Its economy and way of life revolved around farming, with cotton as the main crop. Farmers dedicated vast acreages to cotton production, a practice that tied the region into the broader Southern agricultural system. However, this reliance on a single crop also made the county vulnerable to market fluctuations and agricultural pests. The early 1900s brought significant challenges to this established agricultural system. The arrival of the boll weevil, a destructive insect that ravaged cotton crops, forced many farmers to confront the unsustainability of their traditional practices. This pest, coupled with other economic pressures, began a slow erosion of the profitability of cotton farming, prompting early warnings and shifts towards agricultural diversification.[1]

The reliance on a single crop, which was deeply embedded in the culture, was harmful to both agricultural land and the farmers. Cultivating just one crop continuously depleted the soil of essential nutrients, demanding an escalating and expensive dependence on fertilizers to sustain output, which crippled the soil. This uninterrupted farming led to exhausted soil and diminished fertility, rendering the land susceptible to erosion. Also, this monocultural approach exposed

[1] R.E. Grabel, "Piedmont Farm Development," *Charlotte Observer*, June 14, 1914, 21; W.A. Graham, "North Carolina Stands in Front Rank in Agriculture," *Charlotte Observer*, October 26, 1916, 35; Carl C. Taylor and C.C. Zimmerman, "Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers," (Raleigh: U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, North Carolina, Tenancy Commission, 1922), 86; Edgar T. Thompson, *Agricultural Mecklenburg & Industrial Charlotte, Social and Economic* (Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1926), accessed December 3, 2025, https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/agricultural-mecklenburg-and-industrial-charlotte-social-and-economic/5525099; Richard Mattson and Bill Huffman, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places, United States Department of the Interior National Park Service (1990), accessed December 3, 2025, https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/MK3139.pdf; Sherry J. Joines and Dan L. Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission: 1999).

farmers to financial risk, as their entire income depended on the outcome of a single harvest, making them more vulnerable to market instability, pest outbreaks, and unfavorable weather.[2]

In response to these pervasive issues, agricultural reformers, like the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina Extension Service, advocated during the early twentieth century for farmers to broaden their crop diversity and, importantly, to expand their livestock operations. Nevertheless, many farmers encountered difficulties in adopting these reforms, whether due to a strong preference for traditional cotton farming or lack of funds for acquiring new machinery, despite guidance from county extension agents. This focus on cotton also meant that southern farmers, including those in Mecklenburg County, frequently lacked education on new agricultural methods – like the use of silos for feed storage – which were standard in more varied farming areas. The shift away from this economically unstable and environmentally damaging system, though gradual, helped the region move toward a more resilient and modern agricultural economy.[3]

One of the main factors in the growth of Mecklenburg County was the introduction of the railroad. It shaped Charlotte's trajectory and influenced the broader socio-economic landscape of Mecklenburg County. The arrival of the Charlotte and South Carolina track in 1852 gave Charlotte a boost over its regional counterparts. Other state-led railway projects, like the North Carolina Railroad from Raleigh and Goldsboro, further solidified Charlotte's position as a vital railroad junction by 1854. This integration connected Charlotte and Mecklenburg County with eastern North Carolina, transforming travel patterns and commercial activity. With the convergence of four distinct rail lines by the early 1860s – including the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio line and the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford Railroad – Charlotte became a hub for trade and industry. The railroad's influence extended significantly into Mecklenburg County, as Charlotte's rising importance continued even as the traditional plantation economy of the rural areas began to decline. The railroad was more than just infrastructure; it impacted Charlotte's urban expansion and changed the agrarian character of Mecklenburg County, setting the stage for its eventual importance as the Carolinas' largest city.[4]

Mecklenburg County, particularly Charlotte, experienced intense population growth, prompting a significant shift from a predominantly rural to an increasingly urbanized landscape. This evolution points to a broader regional pattern of development throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the mid-19th century, Charlotte was an inland trading village with a population of 1,065. Mecklenburg County at this time was largely rural, with Charlotte accounting for only eight

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[2] Graham, "North Carolina Stands in Front Rank in Agriculture"; Taylor and Zimmerman, "Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers"; David R. Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers* (Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 140.

[3] Graham, "North Carolina Stands in Front Rank in Agriculture"; Taylor and Zimmerman, "Economic and Social Conditions of North Carolina Farmers"; Thompson, *Agricultural Mecklenburg & Industrial Charlotte, Social and Economic*; Zeb C. Strawn, "Banker Predicts Big Farm Year," *Charlotte News*, Jan 30, 1953, 69; Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers,* 140.

[4] Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte: A History," accessed December 3, 2025, http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/THE-GROWTH-OF-CHARLOTTE.pdf.

percent of its total population. The arrival of the railroad in 1852 fueled Charlotte's growth. By 1860, the city's population had more than doubled to 2,265, increasing its share of the county's population to thirteen percent. This trend accelerated, and by 1870, Charlotte's population had almost doubled again to 4,473, totaling eighteen percent of Mecklenburg County's inhabitants. This early growth established Charlotte as an emerging town inside a rural county.[5]

At the turn of the twentieth century, Mecklenburg County still retained its rural character, with only 32.7 percent of its population classified as urban and 62.3 percent as rural. However, the tide turned quickly. By 1910 the total population was 67,031 but the county's urban population surpassed its rural inhabitants for the first time, reaching 50.7 percent. This momentum continued into 1920, with the urban population growing to 57.4 percent, and notably, it was in this year that farm production in the county began to decline, signaling an economic shift. By 1930 Mecklenburg County's population had almost doubled to 127,971. This rapid urbanization was fueled by factors like the "Good Roads" program initiated in the 1920s by North Carolina Governor Cameron Morrison (1869-1953), which paved highways converging on Charlotte, enhancing its role as a distribution and trucking center. Charlotte experienced even more growth, from 34,014 to 82,675 in the same two decades, enabling the Queen City to surpass Charleston, South Carolina, as the largest city in both Carolinas.[6]

While the Great Depression caused a temporary slowdown in Charlotte's growth, its diversified economy ensured that growth did not halt entirely. Between 1930 and 1940, the city's population still increased by 22 percent, reaching 100,000. The post-World War II era solidified its urban growth. Beginning around 1948, both middle-class and blue-collar suburban areas grew around Charlotte, building over what was once agricultural land. In 1938 the streetcar system was replaced by a network of expressways and widened thoroughfares, starting with Independence Boulevard in 1946. These new roads encouraged commuting to suburban homes and the relocation of businesses from downtown to cheaper farmland just outside the city, further accelerating the conversion of rural areas into urban and suburban landscapes. A combination of continuous expansion, declining interest in agriculture careers for younger generations, less need for sustenance farming, and increased corporate farming meant more farmers chose to sell their land for development, resulting in a significant decline in the number of farmland acreage in Mecklenburg County.[7]

Extension Services & Farmer Education

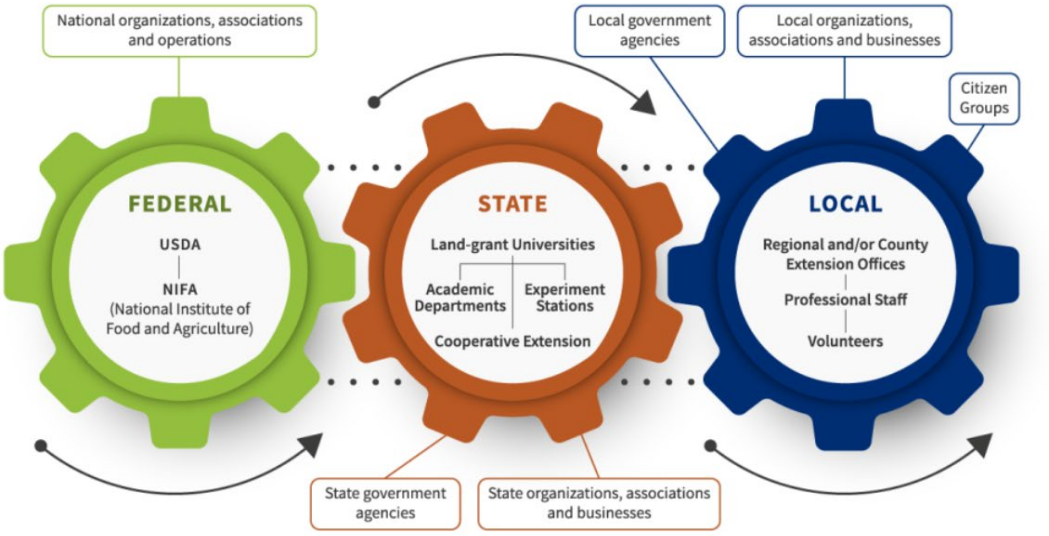
Early in the twentieth century there was a determined effort by the Agricultural Department of North Carolina to promote diversified farming, particularly the raising of livestock like dairy and beef cattle, a practice not typically pursued in Mecklenburg County beyond subsistence farming. This shift in agricultural strategy was seen as a more profitable and sustainable path. The push was

[5] Mattson and Huffman, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina"; Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte"; Joines and Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina."

[6] Mattson and Huffman, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina"; Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte."

[7] Goldfield, *Cotton Fields and Skyscrapers,* 143; Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte."

not just advisory; it involved education, demonstration, and economic incentives to reshape farming in regions like Mecklenburg County. Agricultural departments, often through their county extension agents, became the front line of this educational work. These agents worked directly with farmers, sharing information on new crops, livestock management, and new technologies. Their role was to bridge the gap between scientific agricultural research, technological innovations, and practical farm application. This proactive approach by agricultural bodies guided rural communities through a period of significant change, helping to lay the groundwork for a more modern and adaptable agricultural future.[8]



How the extension services work.[9]

In the end of the nineteenth century, a group of North Carolina men advocated for an industrial school to serve the state. They aligned with federal initiatives like the 1862 Morrill Act, which funded the teaching of agriculture and mechanical arts, leading to the establishment of North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts in 1887 (later known as North Carolina State University). The Second Morrill Act of 1890 extended these benefits to the Black population, resulting in the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race a year later (later known as North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University). From their inception, both schools recognized the role of extension work in matching research with the practical needs of farmers and families.[10]

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[8] Graham, "North Carolina Stands in Front Rank in Agriculture."

[9] National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Cooperative Extension System," accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.nifa.usda.gov/about-nifa/what-we-do/extension.

[10] North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, "A Brief History," 1998, revised in 2005, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ces.ncsu.edu/cooperative-extension-serving-people-a-brief-history/; Act of July 2, 1862 (First Morrill Act), 12 Stat. 503, Pub. L. 37-108, 7 U.S.C. § 301 et seq. (Washington: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1862), accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/COMPS-10285; North Carolina State University, "Est. 1887: Spirit and Traditions," accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ncsu.edu/spirit-and-traditions/#:~:text=Back%20then%2C%20we%20were%20known,our%20doors%20to%20its%20citizens.; Act of

The Cooperative Extension Service in North Carolina began with the 1914 Smith-Lever Act, which established a system between land-grant colleges and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for demonstration work. The extension services brought research-based knowledge directly to rural communities. Overseen by the USDA and implemented by local extension agents, extension services informed citizens about developments in agriculture, home economics, and other subjects. The core of this work was informal education, which included personalized visits, demonstrations, conferences, and printed materials. This approach was designed to help farmers, and their families manage their households and farms more effectively and economically.[11]

These and other comparable organizations were formed to address the challenges farmers faced, particularly in a post-Civil War landscape. Their purpose was to provide essential resources and support that those farmers sometimes lacked. For example, the Farm Home Administration helped farmers with the financial planning and purchasing of farms, addressing a need for stable land ownership. The National Farm Loan Association provided long-term loans, a critical service for farmers who struggled to secure credit. The creation of the Mecklenburg County Artificial Insemination Association was a direct response to the need to increase dairy production and to improve the quality of livestock. Ultimately, these organizations were designed to aid farmers in a variety of ways, from financial planning and credit access to agricultural developments.[12]

Early efforts focused on improving agricultural production. A prime example is J.F. Eagles (1854-1936) who, in 1907, was the first North Carolina farmer to undertake an agricultural demonstration under a county agent's supervision. His success with U.S. Department of Agriculture soil fertility recommendations showed how "good plowing, liberal applications of limestone, and phosphoric acid and red clover" could revitalize "old, worn-out soils." Such early successes in extension assistance enabled farmers to achieve higher yields on less land, underscoring the enduring importance and impact of the Extension Service on agricultural development.[13]

August 30, 1890 (Second Morrill Act), 26 Stat. 417, Pub. L. 51-841, 7 U.S.C. § 321 et seq. (Washington: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1890), accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/COMPS-10284/; North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, "The Story of North Carolina A&T," accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ncat.edu/installation/history.php#:~:text=North%20Carolina%20Agricultural%20and%20Technical,African%20Americans%20in%20North%20Carolina%2C.

[11] "The Agricultural Cooperative Extension System: An Overview," accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48071; National Institute of Food and Agriculture, "Cooperative Extension System."

[12] Porter Munn, "Mecklenburg Agriculture Grosses $11,375,000 Yearly," *Charlotte Observer*, February 28, 1950, 70.

[13] Act of May 8, 1914 (Agriculture Extension Act or Smith-Lever Act), 38 Stat. 372, Pub. L. 63-95, 7 U.S.C. § 341 et seq. (Washington: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1914), accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/COMPS-10296; North Carolina Cooperative Extension Services, "A Brief History."

Mecklenburg County Extension Homemakers Association logo and catchphrase.[14]

A critical part of the extension service was the homemaker demonstration clubs that taught women in rural and agricultural areas to manage their households. In Mecklenburg County, these services were delivered through the county farm agents department and the home agents department. Local club presidents, like Viola Faires and Newell's Greta Torrence, were tasked with instructing women and girls on a variety of subjects, mirroring the educational mission of the extension service. These clubs were a response to the changing demographics and economic needs of the time. But by the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the relevance of these clubs declined as women's roles and interests shifted, with the Mecklenburg County Extension Homemakers Association closing in 2008. The rise and fall of these clubs reflect the broader history of agricultural extension that connected education and rural life and evolved as society's needs changed.[15]

Silos

In the early 1900s, Mecklenburg County's general lack of familiarity regarding silos, in contrast to other farming regions like the American West, came from its entrenched cotton monoculture. For decades, most Mecklenburg farmers had not thought beyond planting cotton and just enough corn to sustain their work animals. This attention on cash crops meant they were less aware of advancements in diversified farming and feed storage. Accordingly, there was a significant "lack of knowledge of Mecklenburg farmers concerning dairy management" and the benefits of ensilage or silage – composed typically of finely chopped and fermented corn (stalks and all) and sorghum supplemented with hay and other grasses, legumes, and grains – which was crucial for supporting profitable livestock operations. The pervasive "cash-crop tradition of farming" created a blind spot, preventing the widespread adoption and understanding of technologies like silos that were important for diversified agriculture.[16]

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[14] Mecklenburg County Extension Homemakers Association, "logo and phrase clipping," 1965, MS0400, box 9, Mecklenburg County Extension Homemakers Association Records, 1925-2008, 1960-2008, Atkins Library Special Collections and University Archives Manuscripts, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

[15] "The Agricultural Cooperative Extension System: An Overview"; National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Cooperative Extension System"; Greta Torrence, "History of Newell, Torrence Interview," interview by Liz Vaagen, July 31, 202, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark Commission files ("Torrence Interview").

[16] Thompson, *Agricultural Mecklenburg & Industrial Charlotte, Social and Economic*; Strawn, "Banker Predicts Big Farm Year"; Loran Berg, "The Farmers' Tower: The Development of the Tower Silo," *Historia* 20 (2011): 38, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.eiu.edu/historia/2011Berg.pdf; A.T. Holman, "Production of Good Silage in North Carolina," *Charlotte Observer*, June 17, 1929, 12; Statistical Bulletin No. 217, "Silage from 1955 Crops" (Washington DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1957), 3, 6, 12, accessed December 3, 2025, https://esmis.nal.usda.gov/sites/default/release-

At the turn of the century silos were a rarity in Mecklenburg County; available records attribute the county's first silo to Henry C. Dotger (1862-1936), who built his silo in 1904. By 1916 the number grew to 54, reflecting a growing recognition among farmers of their economic advantages. As the profitability of cotton decreased, because of challenges like the boll weevil, farmers were encouraged to embrace livestock that needed efficient feed production and storage. Silos provided a solution by allowing farmers to convert crops into silage, a nutritious and cost-effective feed that could sustain animals year-round. This innovation reduced feeding expenses, boosted milk and fat production in dairy herds, and maximized the utility of farm resources. The ensilaging process depends upon the fermentation of a green crop piled, packed, and stored under pressure so as to eliminate air from the fodder and thereby prevent decay.[17]

Various types of silos were constructed as styles and materials changed with time. These included concrete, metal, stave (see images below), hollow tile, brick, and galvanized metal silos, as well as specific designs like "common sense" and "modified Wisconsin" silos (see images on the next page). Masonry silos, like concrete, were particularly valued for their strength, airtightness, and resistance to fire. Beyond their functional benefits, silos also held symbolic significance. They represented American technological progress in agriculture and served as iconic markers on the rural landscape. Even as urbanization rapidly consumes vast tracts of farmland, the Faires Farm silos continue to evoke Mecklenburg county's agrarian heritage.[18]

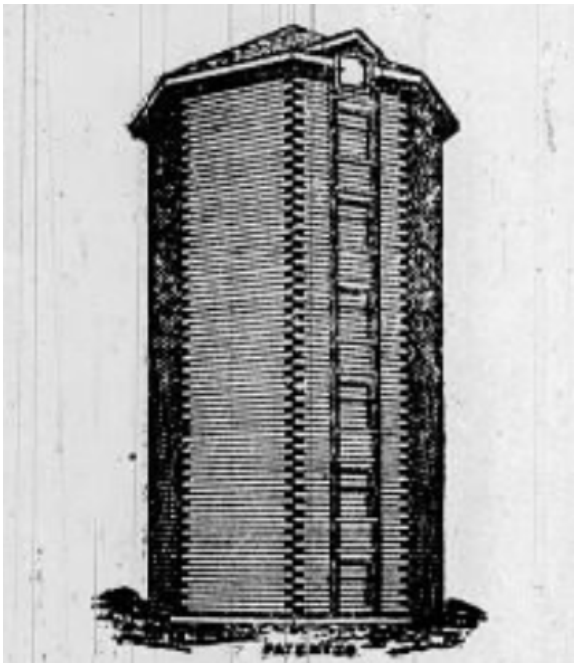
Wooden silos, built like barrels with staves and steel hoops, had a short lifespan due to weather damage. Concrete stave silos quickly became the new standard because of their superior durability.[19]

files/m326m173p/jw827g16f/1g05fg013/silage_Silage_from_1955_Crops_-_Harvesting__Storing__Preserving__1955.pdf.

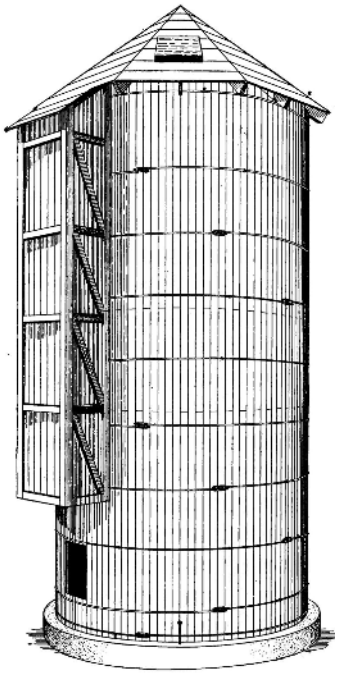
[17] A.M. Leland, "An Appreciative Visitor: Mecklenburg Gets Praise," *Charlotte Observer*, September 8, 1904, 6; Graham, "North Carolina Stands in Front Rank in Agriculture"; Berg, "The Farmers' Tower," 38, 40.

[18] R.E. Grabel, "Piedmont Farm Development," *Charlotte Observer*, June 14, 1914, 21; J. L. Wall, "Silo Most Important Adjunct to Successful Dairy Farming," *Charlotte Observer*, September 8, 1930, 12.

[19] Silo Pros, "What Are Silo Staves and Why Are They Important?," accessed December 3, 2025, https://silo-pros.com/blog/what-are-silo-staves/.



The “Common Sense” silo is a solid wooden structure built with 2x4s laid flat and fastened together with nails.[20]



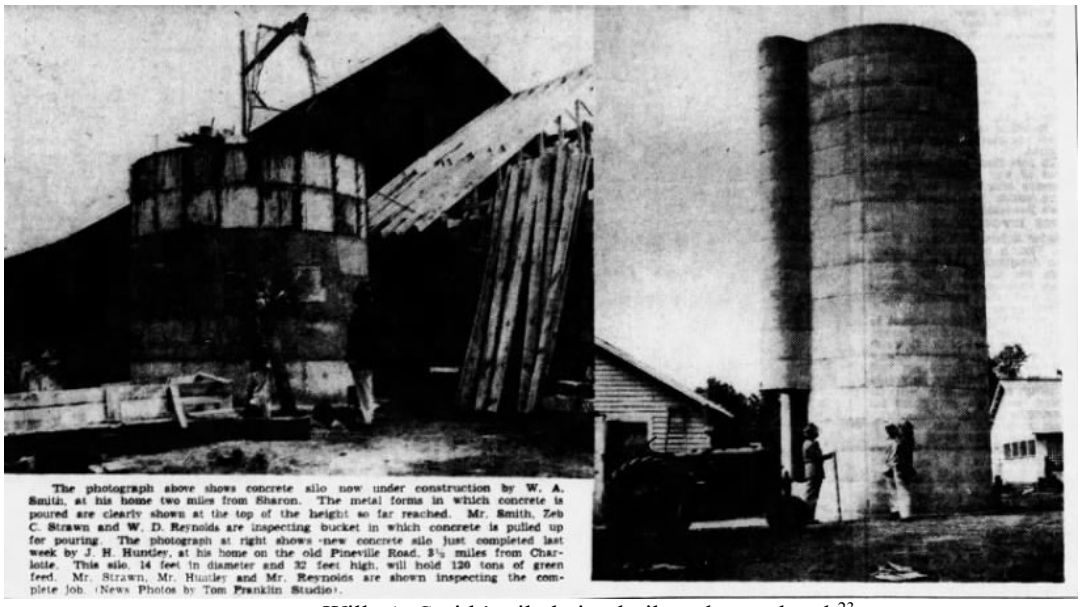
The modified Wisconsin silo uses horizontal sheathing bent around vertical studs to create a hoop that resists silage pressure, eliminating the need for metal reinforcement.[21]

[20] Staff Writer, “Silo Question Answered,” *The Niobrara* (NE) *Tribune*, February 15, 1912, 1.

[21] Helmer Rabled, A.K. Risser, and K.E. Parks, “Homemade Silos,” *U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmers’ Bulletin*, no. 589, July 21, 1914, 44, accessed December 3, 2025, https://archive.org/details/sim_farmers-bulletin_1914-06-21_589/mode/2up.

Citizens Bank

Beyond education, financial institutions and local initiatives also played a role in helping farmers secure the benefit of technological advancements in agriculture. Recognizing the economic benefits that modern farming methods could bring to the region, particularly livestock production, Citizens Bank – founded in Charlotte in November 1914 as Citizens Savings & Loan Corporation – embarked on a program to encourage silo construction. The bank's approach was practical and impactful. Rather than simply offer loans for silo construction, Citizens Bank directly purchased and loaned out (for a small fee) specialized metal forms required for building concrete silos. The creation of Citizens Bank's silo-building program was spurred by a collaborative effort. Early in 1945, County Agent W. D. Reynolds and Assistant County Agent J. A. Warren approached Zeb C. Strawn (1900-1987), assistant cashier of Citizens Bank (and future president of the company), to discuss the critical need for concrete silo forms that could be loaned to the county's farmers and dairymen. Strawn, raised on a farm and serving a bank with a significant farmer clientele, understood the importance of the request. As a result, Citizens Bank made an investment, purchasing steel forms at a cost of $1,000 and donating them to Mecklenburg County. This plan was not merely philanthropic; by fostering the success of its agricultural customers, the bank ensured their clients' financial stability and instilled trust in the bank, creating a mutually beneficial cycle of prosperity for both the farmers and the financial institution.[22]



The photograph above shows concrete silo now under construction by W. A. Smith, at his home two miles from Sharon. The metal forms in which concrete is poured are clearly shown at the top of the height so far reached. Mr. Smith, Zeb C. Strawn and W. D. Reynolds are inspecting bucket in which concrete is pulled up for pouring. The photograph at right shows new concrete silo just completed last week by J. H. Huntley, at his home on the old Pineville Road, 3½ miles from Charlotte. This silo, 14 feet in diameter and 32 feet high, will hold 120 tons of green feed. Mr. Strawn, Mr. Huntley and Mr. Reynolds are shown inspecting the complete job. (News Photos by Tom Franklin Studio).

Wille A. Smith's silo being built and completed.[23]

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[22] LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockmann, *Hornets' Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), 307; "Formerly Citizens Savings & Loan Co.," advertisement, *Charlotte News*, October 26, 1943, 14; Bob Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork," *Charlotte News*, June 16, 1945, 3; F.H. Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building," *Charlotte News*, April 22, 1946, 10: L.C. Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo," *Charlotte Observer*, July 30, 1951, 17.

[23] Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building."

The forms consisted of steel plates that, when bolted together, created two concentric circles. Concrete would then be poured into the space between these circles, and the forms could be removed after approximately 24 hours, once the concrete had hardened. Farmers utilizing the program followed a straightforward, efficient process. For example, for Willie A. Smith (1896-1959), a dairyman with 50 cows building a 12-foot diameter, 36-foot-high silo near Sharon, the steel forms were set in place, and concrete was poured between them. The concrete was often lifted using tractor power, a method described as both "convenient and economical," costing only $1.15 worth of gasoline for the entire silo. This efficiency allowed farmers to focus on constructing durable and airtight masonry silos, which were preferred for their strength, resistance to fire, and ability to be built higher—all crucial advancements over earlier feed storage methods. This method of silo construction evolved into what is known today as jumpform silo construction.[24]

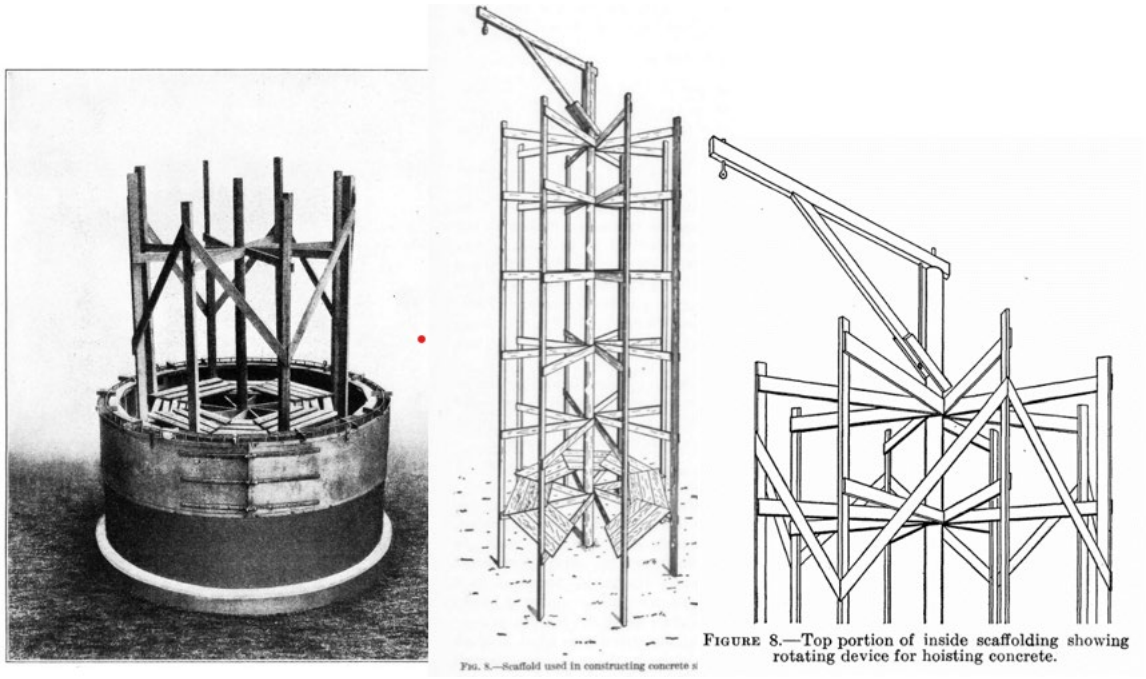


FIG. 8.—Scaffold used in constructing concrete s

FIGURE 8.—Top portion of inside scaffolding showing rotating device for hoisting concrete.

After setting the forms in place for the first time, the interior scaffolding, which is less expensive and easier for concrete silos, is built. The scaffolding supports the forms and workers as they built upwards.[25]

This direct involvement from the banking sector indicates a community-wide recognition of the economic benefits of agricultural diversification and a willingness to support farmers in adopting these new methods. Such programs effectively reduced the barriers to entry for new technologies and practices, making it easier and more affordable for individual farmers to make the transition. The only charge for using these valuable forms was $1 per foot of silo altitude, with the collected

[24] Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork"; Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building"; Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo"; Dennis Blauser, "Jumpform Silos: An Economical Choice," Marrietta Silos Blog, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.mariettasilos.com/blog/28/jumpform-silos-an-economical-silo-construction-choice#:~:text=The%20system%20is%20available%20in%20a%20variety,is%20not%20adversely%20affected%20by%20weather%20events.

[25] Rabled et al., "Homemade Silos," 18.

fees contributing to funds for the maintenance, repair, and potentially the purchase of new forms. For instance, a 14-foot-diameter, 32-foot-high structure capable of holding 120 tons of green feed, cost $500.27 – less than half what it would have cost without the forms.[26]

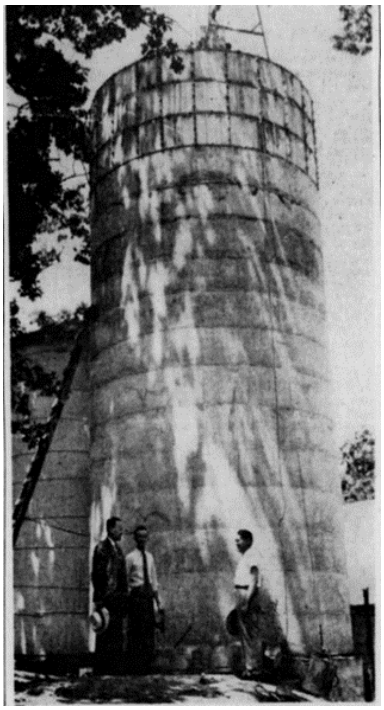
Strawn emphasized the program's philosophy, "Every dairyman and farmer knows that his production increases and his feed costs drop off during the grazing period, and feeding silage is the dairyman's means of having green feed the year 'round." He stressed that modern silos were the only way to ensure silage availability at the proper time. The program's success was immediate; eleven silos were built with the forms in 1945. Strawn predicted at least 25 new concrete silos would be built in the following year. Beyond their practical utility, these tower silos profoundly impacted the rural landscape, serving as symbols of the traditional farmstead and representing "American technological progress" in solving long-standing agricultural challenges. Citizens Bank's innovative program not only directly aided numerous farmers but also played a pivotal role in shaping the modern, diversified agricultural economy of Mecklenburg County.[27]

An article from the *Charlotte Observer* in 1945 highlighted this "symbol of growing teamwork between agriculture and business," reporting on William T. Harris (1909-1989), who was the first to build a 12' by 40' concrete silo using forms provided by the bank. Harris, a prominent city leader and namesake for the W.T. Harris Boulevard that runs near the Faires Farm silos, was also a publicly recognized customer of Citizens Bank. The bank even planned to secure additional forms, indicating the program's success and growing demand. This program was not an isolated incident but a sustained effort. Six years later, in 1951, the *Charlotte Observer* again showcased the program's impact, featuring Frank Wilson Faires (1909-1997). Faires built a "beautiful 110-ton concrete silo" measuring 12 feet in diameter and 34 feet in height, the first of the two silos that are the subject of this report, with forms loaned from Citizens Bank. The article underscored the direct benefits, noting that the new silo would "add value to the farm" and "contribute to a more profitable livestock program" for his cattle.[28]

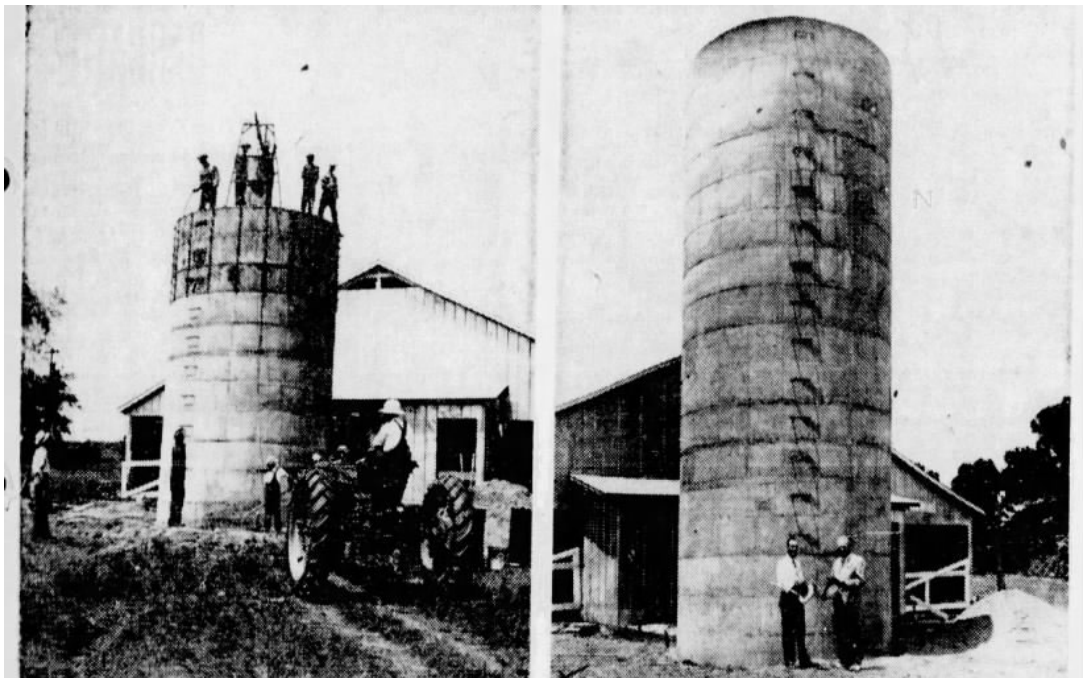
[26] Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork"; Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building"; Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo."

[27] Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building."

[28] Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork"; Jeter, "Mecklenburg Going in For Silo Building"; Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo"; Advertisement, "What a Citizens Bank Checking Account can do for Your Business," *Charlotte News*, April 23, 1956, 2.



W. T. Harris silo, six miles out of the Albemarle Road. Standing are Zeb C. Strawn, assistant cashier of the bank, Jarvis A. Warren, assistant County farm agent, and W. D. Reynolds, the farm agent.[29]



Frank W. Faires' first silo in progress (left) and completed on the right. At the base of the completed structure are journalist L.C. Laney and Zeb C. Strawn.[30]

[29] Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork."

[30] Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo."

The silo-building program serves as one example of the pivotal role that Citizens Bank played in the financial history of Mecklenburg County. Its narrative – rooted in the local economy and actively supportive of the region's agricultural sector – is one of local engagement, growth, and eventual merger into larger banking entities, reflecting the broader consolidation trends in the American financial landscape. Citizens Bank opened for business in 1914 under the leadership of President James T. Porter (1874-1952), recognized as the first North Carolinian to enter industrial banking. Strawn, who joined the bank in 1923 as a bookkeeper, succeeded Porter as the institution's president upon his predecessor's death. Initially known as Citizens Savings and Loan Company, Citizens Bank gained commercial banking privileges in the early 1940s. From its earliest days, and especially during Strawn's tenure, Citizens Bank invested deeply in agriculture, earning it the moniker "the farmers' bank" throughout rural Mecklenburg County. Strawn believed in the "golden era of growth" for North Carolina's agriculture, noting its "amazing progress" from 1928 to 1953 in areas like crop yields, animal production, and farm worker efficiency.[31]

The bank actively supported that vision through agricultural developments and loan programs. With the bank's banking, local farmers financed critical purchases of modern equipment, expanded their beef and dairy cattle herds, acquired essential supplies like feeds and fertilizers, and modernized their farms. The bank launched a 4-H Club calf program in 1942, lending money to young members to buy purebred calves. In 1950, they sponsored the Mecklenburg Home Beautification Contest, fostering interest in rural home improvement by awarding $1,000 in prize money to 4-H Club participants.[32]

Over time, Citizens Bank became part of a larger banking narrative through a series of mergers. Citizens Bank joined Northwestern in 1966, marking its integration into a larger regional banking system. Northwestern Bank then merged with First Union in 1985. As the acquisitions and mergers continued, First Union Bank Corporation became Wachovia in 2001. Finally, in 2008, Wells Fargo acquired Wachovia, bringing the original Citizens Bank's legacy under the umbrella of one of the largest financial institutions in the United States. This sequence shows the significant consolidation that reshaped the banking industry over several decades, transforming local institutions with deep community ties into components of international companies.[33]

Citizens Bank's agricultural banking program was more than mere financial aid; it represented a substantial investment in the future of Mecklenburg County. By providing essential tools and demonstrating a commitment to modern farming practices, the bank facilitated the education of local farmers as to the long-term benefits of diversification and improved feed storage. By 1951,

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[31] Staff Writer, "Citizens Bank Would Offer Check Services," *Charlotte News*, June 9, 1947, 13; Strawn, "Banker Predicts Big Farm Year"; Staff Writer, "Citizens Bank Becomes Known as Farmers Bank," *Charlotte Observer*, February 22, 1954, 38; Rolfe Neill, "Citizens Bank Buys Building, Announce Expansion Plan," *Charlotte Observer*, January 24, 1959, 13.

[32] Staff Writer, "Citizens Bank Becomes Known as Farmers Bank."

[33] Staff Writer, "Citizens Bank Joins Northwestern," *Charlotte News*, June 1, 1966, 5; Staff Writer, "Northwestern Merger Gets Approval," *Charlotte News*, June 12, 1985, 13; Julian M. Pleasants, "First Union Bank Corporation," in *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ncpedia.org/first-union-bank-corporation.

the innovative program had supported Mecklenburg County farmers in the building of 60 silos. This initiative facilitated the transition from cotton-centric farming to a more diversified, livestock-based economy, leaving a legacy in the form of concrete silos that stood as symbols of agricultural progress and a unique partnership between local business and farming communities.[34]

Frank and Viola Faires

Frank W. Faires' life was intertwined with both the agricultural and evolving business landscapes of Mecklenburg County, embodying the spirit of enterprise that characterized the mid-twentieth century. Born in Gaston County, Faires moved with his parents, William W. and Lillie R. Faires, to South Carolina at age five. Eight years later, the family resettled in Mecklenburg County, where Frank resided until his death in 1997. Frank was the fifth of ten children and the eldest son of William and Lillie. He received his education at Sharon School, the Asheville Farm School, and State College in Raleigh. He married Miss Viola Patterson (1907-1995), daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James G. Patterson of Fort Mill, South Carolina, in January of 1933. The couple initially resided on Kingston Avenue in Charlotte before establishing their home at the self-named "Fairlake Farm."[35]

Raised on a farm at Pleasant Valley, South Carolina, Viola initially aspired to be a home economics teacher but ultimately dedicated herself to becoming a celebrated homemaker. She was an exceptionally talented and prolific individual, as evidenced by her remarkable achievement of winning 127 ribbons across seven categories at the 1963 Mecklenburg Fair, including handicraft, antiques, floriculture, baking, canning, arts, and agriculture. She won Mecklenburg County's "Homemaker of The Year" award for 1962, 1963 and 1964, a distinction bestowed upon the winner of the most ribbons at each year's county fair. An active participant, Viola served as president of both the Newell Home Demonstration Club and the Newell Garden Club, as well as volunteering as a floriculture supervisor for the county fair. She also worked for an unknown period of time as a telephone operator. Both Viola and Frank were members of the Back Creek A.R.P. Church and shared a passion for trailer-camping, a hobby uniquely connected to Frank's business ventures. Viola was actively involved in the pot-luck supper committee for the two travel-trailer clubs to which the Faires belonged, the Wally Byam Caravan Club and the Carolina Travel Trailer Club.[36]

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[34] Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo."

[35] Will O'Mae Adams, "Faires Trailer Holds Formal Opening Today," *The Charlotte Observer*, October 11, 1952, 7; United States Federal Census records for William Wilson Faires, all on Ancestry.com, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6061/images/4390941_00014?pId=43286273 (1920); https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6224/images/4608302_00142?pId=76152401 (1930); Death Notices, "Mr. Frank Wilson Faires," *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 1997, 24; Margaret Kelly Abernathy, "Miss Patterson, Mr. Faires Wed," *Charlotte Observer*, January 23, 1933, 4.

[36] Sandra Gonzales, "Homemaker Wins Again," *Charlotte Observer*, October 5, 1963; Helen Moore, "Blue Ribbon Homemaker: Viola Faires," *Charlotte Observer,* September 21, 1967, 77; Mecklenburg Deaths, "Mrs. Viola Patterson Faires," *Charlotte Observer*, October 5, 1995, 6C; Death Notices, "Mr. Frank Wilson Faires." The U.S. Federal Census for both 1930 and 1940 list Viola as a telephone operator; thereafter, she is listed as a homemaker. United States Federal Census records for Viola Patterson Faires, all on Ancestry.com, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6224/records/97103760 (1930), https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2442/records/154497936 (1940), https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/62308/records/149564650 (1950).

Viola Faires displays her winning ribbons from the 1967 Mecklenburg Fair.[37]

Frank Faires began his farming career in the early 1940s and built the family home (no longer standing) on their property in the Newell community (northeast of central Charlotte) in 1942. Frank's cattle operations spanned over 200 acres, eventually expanding to 330 acres, where he cultivated fescue for hay and silage – essential feed for his animals. His commitment to modern agricultural practices was evident in 1951 when he constructed the first of two concrete silos on his farm. The first structure, built with forms borrowed from Citizens Bank, and the eventual second silo supported Faires' livestock throughout the year. There are no known records suggesting the builder or construction date of Frank's second silo, but available aerial photographs indicate its completion sometime between 1951 and 1978. That lack of documentation suggests that, as of the time of the second silo's construction, such towering storage facilities had become a more common sight in Mecklenburg County, such that their construction no longer garnered the public attention they once attracted. Frank specialized in Charolaise beef cattle. Although the size of the Faires' livestock operation is unclear, a 1960 auction notice – advertising Frank's forthcoming sales of "175 Top Grade Hereford Cattle" – suggests that his herd was rather sizeable.[38]

Beyond his agricultural pursuits, Frank Faires also demonstrated an entrepreneurial flair. His journey began modestly in 1932, running an auto service station in the 1300 block of Charlotte's South Boulevard. In 1937, he founded one of North Carolina's first mobile home dealerships, the Faires Trailer Company (later known as Faires Mobile Homes, Inc., and Faires, Inc.), for which he served as president and general manager. His business grew rapidly. A 1940 expansion included

[37] Moore, "Blue Ribbon Homemaker: Viola Faires."

[38] Laney, "Every Livestock Farmer Should Have a Good Silo"; Death Notices, "Mr. Frank Wilson Faires"; Advertisement, Frank Faires Farm, *Charlotte Observer*, March 13, 1960, 5C.

the construction of a service station for trailers. A second business expansion in 1947 – also located on South Boulevard – added space for offices, a stockroom, and a parts department. The business was formally incorporated in April 1949, with Frank W. Faires as president and treasurer, his brothers William H. and Ralph L. Faires as vice president and secretary respectively, and Herbert Moody, Jr. as assistant secretary.[39]

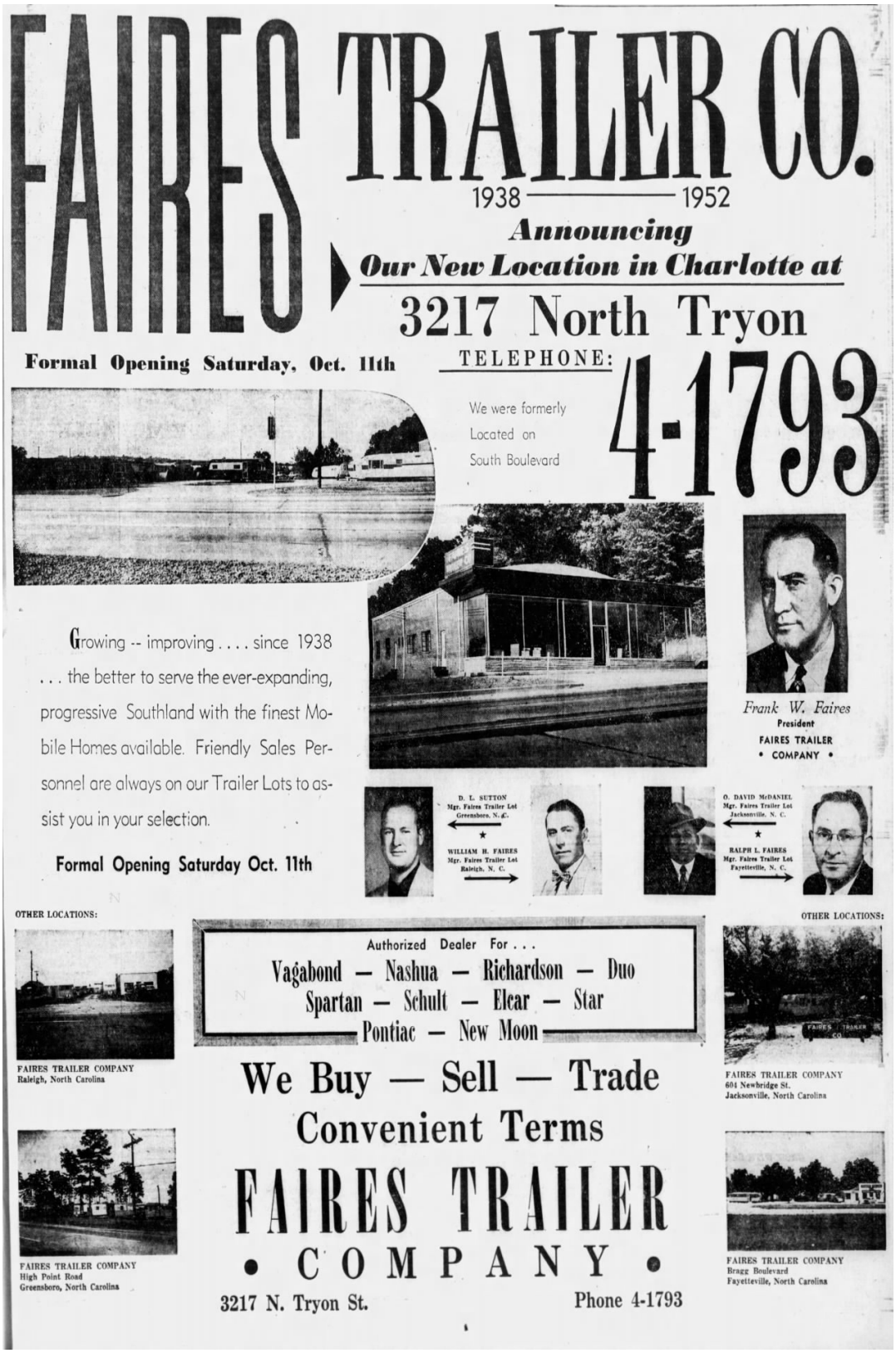
In 1952 the formal opening of Faires Trailer Company's new building at 3217 N. Tryon St. marked a significant milestone. The modern, one-story masonry structure, covering approximately 5,000 square feet on a two-acre lot, was specifically designed for its purpose. Visitors could explore displays of trailer appliances and furnishings near the front, alongside trailer parts. The sales lot, spanned nearly 44,000 square feet, displayed approximately 25 modern house trailers, each accessible via a pastel-colored concrete block walkway. Faires Trailer Company rapidly expanded its reach with multiple branch offices across North Carolina: Fayetteville (May 1947), Raleigh (Fall 1948), Greensboro (January 1949), and Jacksonville (July 1949). This extensive network and comprehensive service offering underscored Frank's vision, establishing his company as a pioneering force in the nascent mobile home market. By 1960, Faires Trailer Company was one of the largest mobile home businesses in the South. For ten years, Frank was recognized as one of the top mobile home dealers in the United States.[40]

Promotional postcard for Faires Trailer Company's Greensboro retail location (circa 1953).[41]

[39] Death Notices, "Mr. Frank Wilson Faires," *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 1997, 8C; Adams, "Faires Trailer Holds Formal Opening Today"; Staff Writer, "Faires Trailer Fame is Gradually Growing," *The Charlotte Observer*, January 26, 1955, 67.

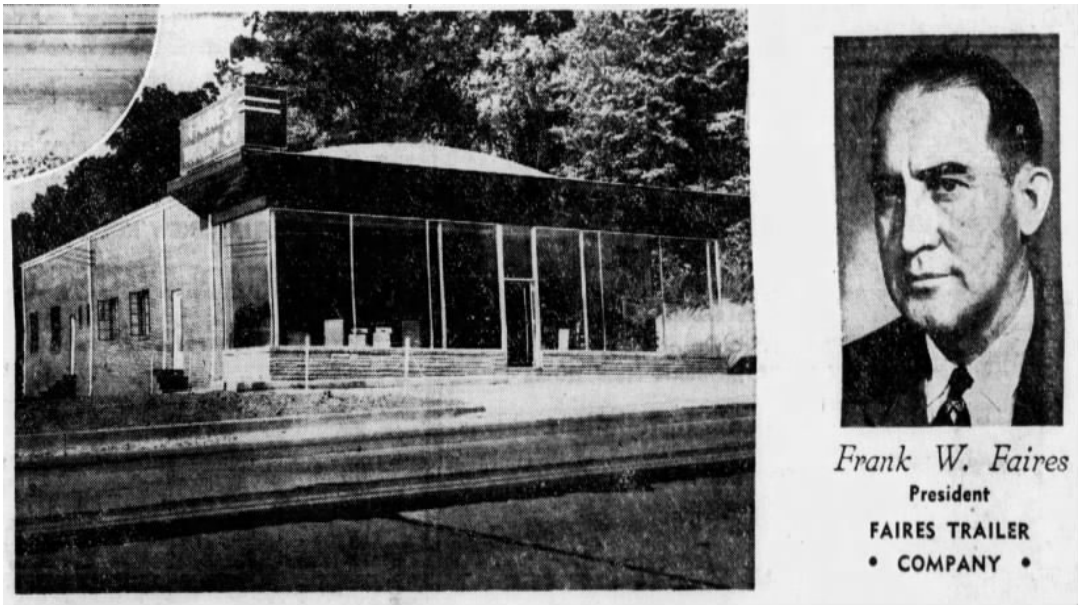
[40] Adams, "Faires Trailer Holds Formal Opening Today"; "Faires Trailer Celebrates 23rd Anniversary In May," *Charlotte Observer*, April 26, 1960, 16B; Death Notices, "Mr. Frank Wilson Faires."

[41] "Faires Trailer Company," Flickr.com, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.flickr.com/photos/30848961@N04/3094207478/in/pool-969977@N23/.



The 1952 grand opening announcement for Faires Trailer Company's new North Tryon Street retail location.[42]

[42] Advertisement, Faires Trailer Company, *Charlotte News*, October 10, 1952, 13B.



Detail of grand opening announcement showing the new Faires Trailer Company building (still standing) and Frank Faires.[43]

Promotional postcard for Faires Trailer Company's Fayetteville retail location (circa 1947).[44]

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Faires Trailer Co., Fayetteville's leading trailer dealer," Tichnor Brothers Postcard Collection, Boston Public Library, Digital Commonwealth, Massachusetts Collections Online, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search/commonwealth:xs55mx372.

The lives of Frank and Viola Faires represent an important chapter in Mecklenburg County's transition from rural farmland to urban sprawl. Their dedication to modernized farming, a large-scale family business, and community involvement were indicative of a generation that adapted to change. But the end of their story also points to the relentless march of development. In 1985, with no apparent heir to continue their agricultural legacy, Frank and Viola sold their acreage to The Mathisen Company who subsequently transformed it into the "Faires Farm" housing development, consisting of a series of subdivisions and neighborhoods. With a touch of charm, Viola Faires was responsible for naming several streets in the development after friends and family. For example, Katherine Kiker Road was named after a long-term tenant of the Faires family. Following the sale, Frank and Viola moved to a new home on McLean Road, adjacent to the land they had once farmed, living out their final years as neighbors to the very development that replaced them. That final act poignantly symbolizes the larger narrative of Mecklenburg County itself, where a once predominantly rural past has been absorbed into its urban present.[45]

Declining Farmland & Urbanization

The post-World War II era marked a turning point in Mecklenburg County's rural-to-urban transition, which was partially shaped by the spread of automobiles, federal housing policies, and racial dynamics. Federal programs like Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and Veterans Administration (VA) loans encouraged broader suburban sprawl, as did the mobility afforded by the greater availability of automobiles. As a result, Charlotteans were able to live further away from their workplaces, prompting a population migration from urban centers into the county's more rural areas.[46]

Such movement was not all racially neutral. Much of the groundwork for what came to be regarded as "white flight" was laid during the Great Depression by agencies such as the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), whose practice of redlining devalued minority and low-income neighborhoods, restricted investment, and created a segregated housing market. The desegregation of Charlotte's neighborhood schools (such as the Wesley Heights School in Northwest Charlotte in 1961) triggered "blockbusting" tactics by real estate agents throughout much of the city. High-pressure sales tactics predicting an influx of Black residents into historically all-White neighborhoods prompted panic-selling among White homeowners who vacated Charlotte's inner-ring suburban developments. As Charlotte's mid-century Urban Renewal campaigns pushed Black residents from their urban neighborhoods, those now-empty transitional inner-ring suburbs saw an influx of Black families seeking affordable housing. More affluent Black families mirrored their White counterparts by moving to more removed suburban developments along the Beatties Ford

[45] Allen Norwood, "Street Name Game," *Charlotte Observer*, March 18, 1994, 6C; Torrence interview. It is likely that the lack of an heir also contributed to the administrative dissolution of Faires, Inc., formerly known as Faires Trailer Company. Faires, Inc. Business Registration, Office of the North Carolina Secretary of State, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/profile_filings/4860592.

[46] Thomas W. Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte: A History," accessed December 3, 2025, http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/THE-GROWTH-OF-CHARLOTTE.pdf; Staff Writer, "Housing Future Bright for Northeast," *Charlotte Observer*, September 25, 1986, 90; Joines and Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina."

Road corridor. Hence, both post-war expansion and racial segregation factored significantly in the suburbanization of Mecklenburg County.[47]

The development of the University Area in North Charlotte shows how strategic infrastructure, shifting economies, and developers converged to transform a once rural area into an urbanized community. The Interstate Highway program, a massive federal undertaking, reshaped Charlotte's landscape and economics. The opening of I-85 in 1958 (connecting Charlotte with major cities like Atlanta and Richmond) and the 1965 launch of construction for I-77 (that ultimately linked the city to Columbia and beyond) solidified Charlotte's position as a distribution center, especially for trucking. This new network of roadways had the same effect on Mecklenburg County as the railroads had in the 19th century, making the rural outskirts more easily accessible and accelerating development. This connectivity, alongside the decline of the textile industry and the rise of banking as Charlotte's main economic force, set the stage for growth, particularly in the city's northern reaches.[48]

As Charlotte continued its expansion, the area around the Newell township became a prime candidate for development, due in large part to the relocation of Charlotte College (later known as the University of North Carolina at Charlotte) from the city's uptown. School officials launched "University City" in the 1970s as, according to local historian Tom Hanchett, "a mixed-use community intended to attract residents to the city's unfashionable northeast corridor." Builders touted the area as "suburban in setting yet urban in character," advertising an organized road system (including extensions of W.T. Harris Boulevard) that promised "no traffic problems" and short commutes to Uptown Charlotte. Beyond accessibility, University City offered employment opportunities through its proximity to the university, University Memorial Hospital (now Carolinas Medical Center-University), and University Research Park.[49]

Developers like The Mathisen Company played a role in this transformation. In 1985, Chris Mathisen's firm purchased 225 acres from Frank Faires, converting the historic "Faires Farm" into a large-scale housing development designed for 950 homes, a retirement center, a day care center, and recreational facilities. Builders Ryland Homes and Ralph Squires Homes committed to constructing residences, ranging in price and size, including homes along the property's five large ponds where Faires once watered his cattle. The Mathisen Company's donation of land for greenways, calling it "corporate pride," also reflected an understanding of buyer preferences for

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[47] Susan V. Mayer, "Landmark Designation Report, Ziglar-Bowers House," Historic Landmarks Department, Mecklenburg County, January 2025.

[48] Staff Writer, "Northeast"; Joines and Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina"; Hanchett, "The Growth of Charlotte: A History."

[49] Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 261; University of North Carolina at Charlotte, "History, Spirit and Traditions," accessed December 3, 2025, https://alumni.charlotte.edu/history-spirit-and-traditions/#:~:text=As%20soon%20as%20Charlotte%20College,year%2C%20state%2Dsupported%20college; Staff Writer, "Converging Public, Private Interests," *Charlotte News*, April 10, 1985, 4; Staff Writer, "Northeast."

homes next to protected natural spaces, demonstrating how businesses sold public benefits to shape this growing area of Charlotte.[50]

By the latter half of the twentieth century, the transformation was nearly complete. Charlotte's once largely rural landscape, characterized by sprawling farms and small agricultural communities, had been largely absorbed by urban expansion and suburban development. Few relics of that rural past remain. Rising prominently above hundreds of acres of urban development in one of the city's most dynamic areas, the silos of Fairies Farm are an anachronistic reminder of Mecklenburg County's agrarian roots, standing as witnesses to the area's journey from cotton fields to a nationally prominent metropolitan city. Rural preservation efforts today emphasize that even in areas experiencing intense developmental pressures, pockets of such rare rural character should be retained. These efforts seek to manage progress in a way that respects and preserves the rural history of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. This includes recognizing and protecting tangible remnants of Mecklenburg's history, such as the agricultural structures that once filled the landscape.[51]

IV. Architectural Assessment

Faires Farm Silos – Front/West Elevation. North silo on left, south silo on right.

[50] Katherine Forney, "Matthews Firm Says It's Ready to Begin Developing Faires Farm," *Charlotte Observer*, November 30, 1986, G1.

[51] Genna Contino, "Mecklenburg lost 100 square miles of farmland in 20 years. Will This Plan Save the Rest?," *Charlotte Observer*, April 13, 2023, A1.

Above: Rear elevations of the south (left) and north (right) silos. Note the rear ladder on the south silo.
Below: North and front/west elevations (left), and south and front/west elevations (right).

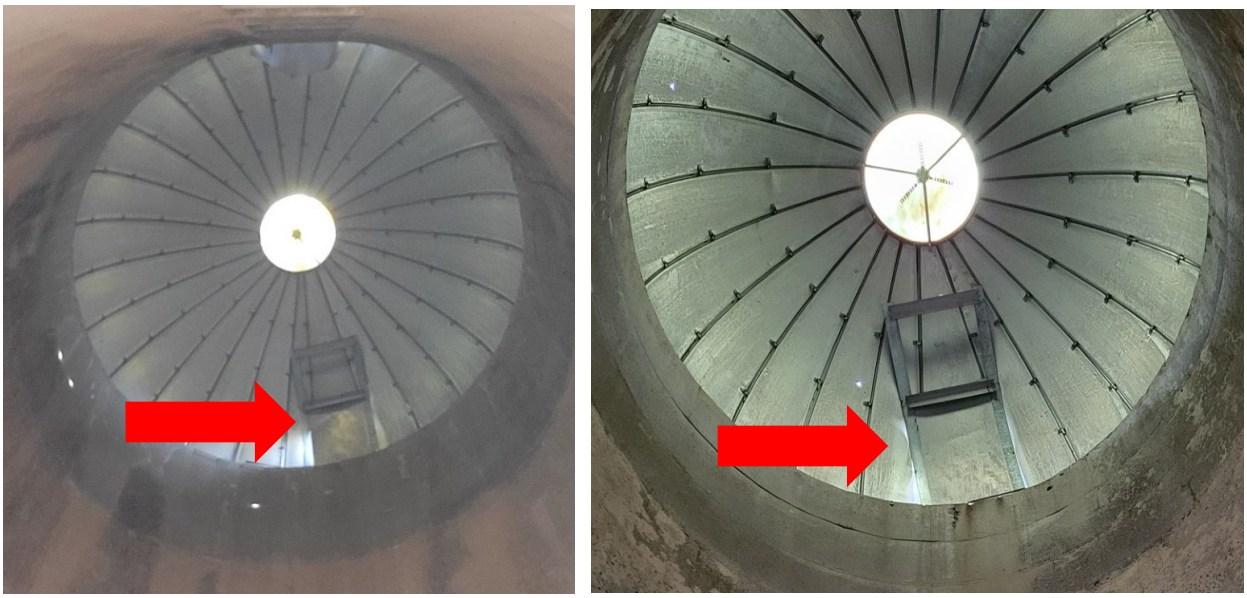
Situated approximately 165 feet from the intersection of Faires Farm and Katherine Kiker Roads, the two Faires Farm tower silos stand side-by-side, separated by a mere 21 inches of open space. The pair of silos is unique, as each was erected using a different technique of masonry construction. The shorter of the two silos was constructed first, using the poured concrete/concentric circle steel form technique described in the "Historical Background" section above. It is the extant silo originally constructed by Frank Faires in 1951. Because that poured concrete silo is situated just south of the second silo, it is referenced hereinafter as the "south silo." The second taller silo, hereinafter the "north silo," was constructed using concrete staves and exterior steel reinforcement hoops. Together, the two Faires Farm silos represent the two most prominent silo construction techniques used during much of the twentieth century before the introduction of steel silos.[52]

Relative distance between the north (on right) and south (on left) silos.

Both silos have poured concrete foundations. The front/west elevation of each silo features a centrally positioned concrete chute that extends vertically to the uppermost level of the concrete structure. Each chute is topped by a conical metallic roof. The silos are made of whitewashed cylindrical concrete walls topped by metallic domed roofs. Each domed roof features a central circular piece fabricated from a translucent material (most likely fiberglass) and an access door on the rear/east elevation. However, only the roof access door of the south silo is accessible, via a ladder installed on the face of its rear/east elevation. That rear ladder is composed of individual pieces of rectangular-shaped rebar mounted into the concrete surface that rise vertically in regular intervals of two feet to the domed roof. The north silo has no ladder leading to its roof door, and the silo's surface bears no visible evidence suggesting the prior presence of such a ladder.

[52] Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "Silo," Pennsylvania Agricultural History Project, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/agriculture/field-guide/silo.html#:~:text=Favored%20materials%20include%20special%20curved,a%20concrete%20stave%20silo%20(c.

Above: Domed and conical roofs of the north (left) and south (right) silos, from the front/west elevation.
Below: The domed roof access doors on the rear/east elevations of the north (left) and south (right) silos. Note that only the south silo includes a ladder for access to its roof door.



Interior view of the access doors (indicated by red arrows) and translucent central roof sections of the north (left) and south (right) silos.

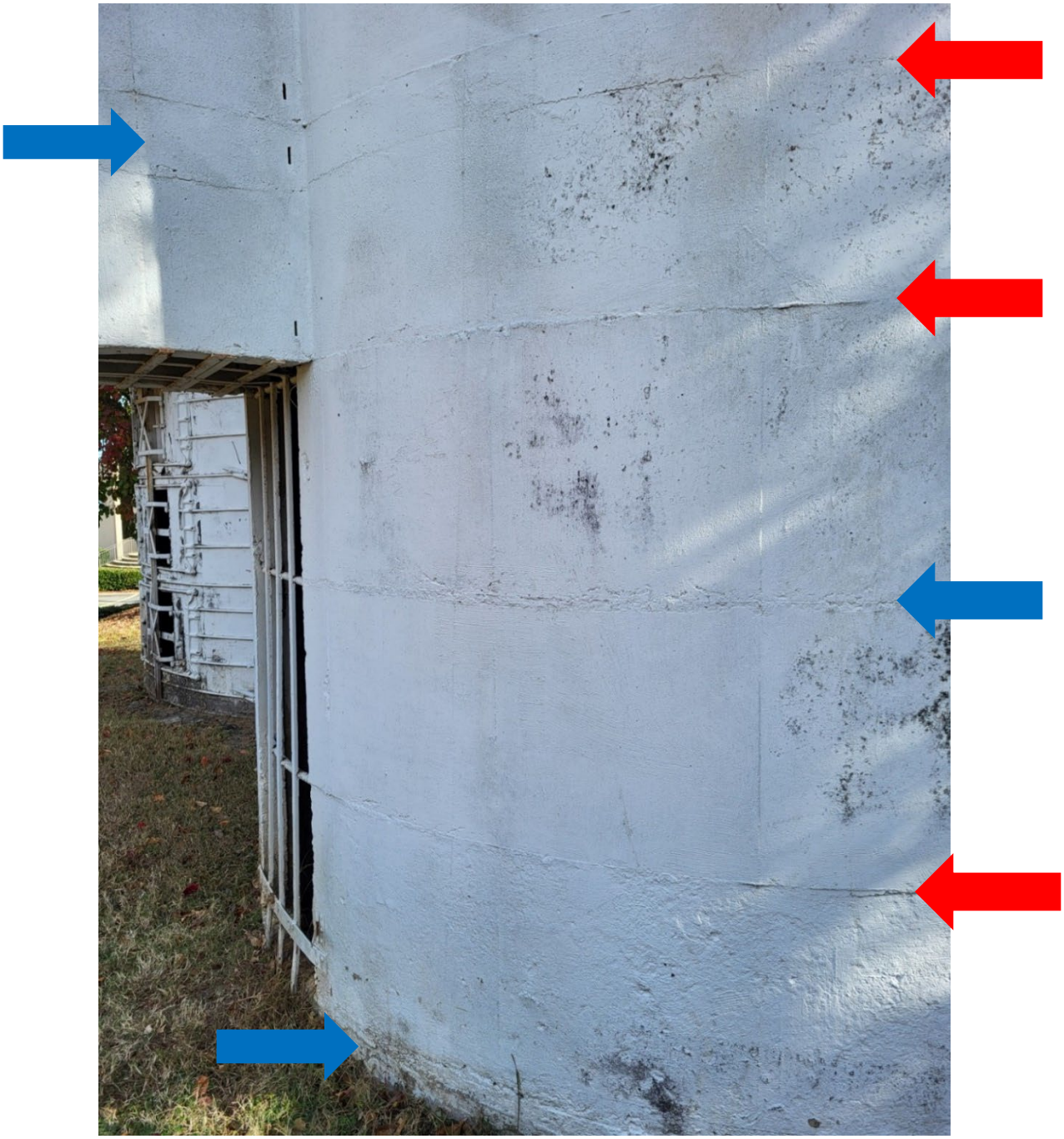
Tower silos like the Faires Farm silos were traditionally loaded from the top by way of roof access doors and unloaded using chutes. Loading was originally accomplished by hand and later by such mechanized systems as conveyor belts, mechanical blowers, and Archimedes screw systems. When needed, silage was unloaded from the stored material's top surface layer. A worker would climb up the side of the silo, step onto the top layer of silage, and pitch the desired quantity down the chute. Each Faires Farm silo features a unique iteration of the "continuous door" configuration, that is an open vertical gap encircled by the chute that extends the entire length of the silo and is bridged by reinforcing rods or other supporting materials. Because the continuous door exposed the stored silage to the elements, the chutes also served as protection of each silo's contents, shielding the silage from rain and cold and preventing loss of silage from blowing winds.[53] Each silo's unique continuous door configuration is discussed in greater detail below.

South Silo

The south silo is comprised of 16 rings or bands of poured concrete, each approximately two feet high and five inches thick. The consistent height of those concrete rings evidences the use of concentric circle steel forms in their fabrication. Those concrete bands are stacked, one atop the other, along with five additional concrete bands randomly situated throughout the otherwise uniform structure and irregularly measuring between approximately two to ten inches high. The concrete portion of the south silo stands approximately 33 feet high; the metal domed roof adds

[53] Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, "Silo"; Sam Moore, "Silo Filling," Farm Collector, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.farmcollector.com/farm-life/silo-filling/#:~:text=Like%20threshing%2C%20silo%20filling%20took,the%20top%20of%20the%20silo; Jennifer Gallus, "The rise and fall of silos," Farm Horizons (November 2007), accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.herald-journal.com/farmhorizons/2007/silos.html; 46-47; Berg, "The Farmers' Tower," 46-47, 55; Cranford, "Huge Concrete Silo on Harris Farm is Symbolic of Teamwork"; C. M. Evans, "Silo Construction," *Bulletin of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas*, no. B-49 (March 1, 1919), 6, 16, accessed December 3, 2025, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=txa.taeb156000&seq=1.

another approximately five feet to the height of the overall structure, for a total approximate height of 38 feet. The semicircular chute on the south silo's front elevation – featuring an opening that measures 32 inches wide and thirty-one inches high with a 4.5-inch-thick wall – is also comprised of stacked concrete rings (13 in total), each also measuring approximately two feet in height. The chute begins approximately six feet from the silo's concrete foundation and continues vertically to the top of the concrete structure for a height of approximately 25 feet. The chute's conical roof is approximately three feet high, making the total approximate height of the chute 28 feet.



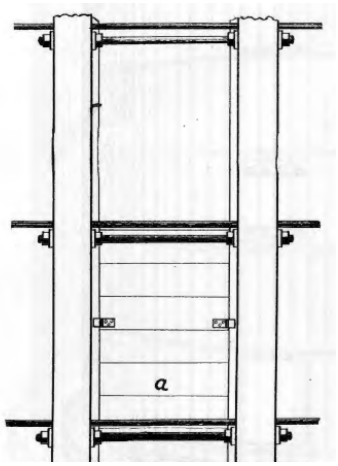
Exterior surface detail of the south silo. Red arrows indicate the seams between the uniform concrete bands; blue arrows indicate illustrative examples of the five additional randomly situated concrete bands of irregular size.

Chute opening (left) and bottom portion of continuous door (right), both on the south silo's front/west elevation.

The south silo's chute is situated above what appears to be a six-foot-high ground level entrance into the silo. That is actually the beginning of a two-foot-wide continuous door that extends vertically from the silo's concrete foundation to the top of the concrete structure. Starting at the base of the chute and continuing vertically for the remaining height of the concrete structure, the continuous door is spanned at regular intervals of approximately two feet by steel rebar reinforcing rods embedded within and holding the poured concrete structure together. Because of their regular positioning, those rods double as a rudimentary ladder. The concrete surface surrounding the reinforcing rods is marked by a series of thin vertical indentations, each approximately two inches in length. One such indentation is positioned above each rod; a second is positioned below each rod. In addition, the interior surface of each side of the continuous door features a rabbeted edge, approximately one inch wide, that runs vertically the entire length of the concrete structure. The combination of the reinforcing rods with their accompanying indentations and the rabbeted edge suggests a possible mounting structure for unloading doors or other barriers (no longer present) to prevent spillage of, and providing access to, the silo's contents. Access to the interior of the silo via both the chute and the ground level of the continuous door is currently blocked by welded flat steel bars and steel rebar affixed to the concrete structure.[54]

[54] Berg, "The Farmers' Tower," 46-47, 55; Jas. N. Price, "The Home Made Stave Silo," Series I, no. 24 (Pullman, WA: State College of Washington, 1916), 13-14, accessed December 3, https://content.libraries.wsu.edu/digital/collection/ext/id/8668/.

Above: Interior detail of the south silo's chute showing the rebar reinforcing rods and the continuous door extending the full height of the concrete structure. Note the pairs of indentations on either side of the rods (red arrows) and the rabbeted edge of the continuous door's interior (blue arrows), suggesting the earlier presence of some type of mounted barrier to secure the silo's contents.
Below: Illustrative example of unloading door component of continuous door construction.



The interior storage area of the south silo measures some 12 feet in diameter. The unfinished interior walls of the south silo show that crushed rocks were introduced into the concrete during the construction process, a common method for reinforcing such concrete structures and one advantage of such solid wall construction method over concrete stave silo construction (such as the north silo), which relies instead on the use of sand, cement, and fine gravel.[55]

[55] Peggy Lee Beedle, "Silos: An Agricultural Success Story" (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin & Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2001), 9-10, accessed December 3, 2025, https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/G3660-04.pdf.

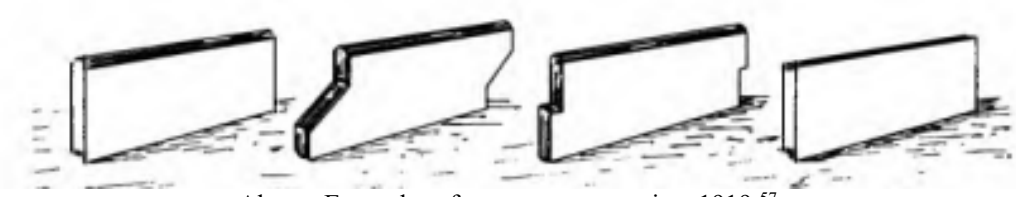


Interior walls of south silo.

North Silo

Unlike its neighbor, the north silo was constructed using concrete staves, an early-to-mid-twentieth-century innovation combining the benefits of wood stave and poured concrete construction that dominated silo construction until the technology of fusing glass or fiberglass onto steel (an innovation borrowed from the brewing industry) was adapted to silo construction in the late 1940s. Construction of concrete stave silos typically proved to be quicker, easier, and less expensive than silos of other materials. Davidson County's J. L. Beall is credited with constructing North Carolina's first documented concrete stave silo in 1929. Concrete stave silos were not widely constructed in Mecklenburg County prior to the 1950s.[56]

[56] Ibid., 9-10, 14; AECOM Technical Services of North Carolina, Inc., "Historic Architecture Eligibility Evaluation Report: Replace Bridge No. 237 over Sorrell Creek on SR 1129 (Little East Fork Road), Haywood County, North Carolina" (April 2017), 25-26, accessed December 3, 2025, https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/historic-preservation-office/PDFs/ER%2017-0880.pdf; Berg, "The Farmers' Tower," 45; Rabled et al., "Homemade Silos," 2; F.H. Jeter, "Finds Mecklenburg County Farm Activity Growing, Too," *Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1952, 8B. The first concrete stave silos in nearby Lincoln and Cabarrus Counties were constructed in 1941. J.G. Morrison, "Lincoln County," *Charlotte Observer*, September 8, 1941, section 2, page 2; R.D. Goodman, "Cabarrus County," *Charlotte Observer*, March 9, 1942, section 2, page 3.



Above: Examples of concrete staves, circa 1919.[57]
Below: Detail of south elevation of north silo showing its concrete stave and steel reinforcement hoop construction.

Concrete staves are precast masonry units with interlocking ridged grooves along each edge that can hooked together. Although the interlocking edges reduce the need for mortar, it is common for mortar or other binding material to be applied between the joints of the concrete stave to bolster structural integrity. Because concrete is stronger in compression than tension, concrete stave silos are then reinforced with flat or round steel reinforcement hoops or rods that encircle the tower

[57] Agricultural Experiment Station, "Silo Construction," Bulletin No. 189 (Ames, IA: Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanical Arts, 1919), 126, accessed December 3, 2015, https://dr.lib.iastate.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/c5a63aab-bd2e-4406-8efa-bd8a80bcddc2/content; Holman, "Production of Good Silage in North Carolina."

horizontally and compress the staves into a tight ring. The staves distribute the load pressure of the silo's contents (*e.g.*, silage) across the hoops, reinforcing the silo against the outward pressure of its contents. Because the interior pressure of the silo's contents pressing down and outward on the staves is greater at the structure's base, the external reinforcement hoops are more closely spaced at the bottom of the silo. The interior pressure decreases as the silo rises vertically, allowing for more spacing between the hoops at the upper reaches of the structure. The hoops are secured and tightened using either steel lugs or steel anchors installed on the exterior surface of the structure. The interior of the silo is then parged with a thin layer of concrete to smooth and seal the surface, preventing the silage fermentation acids from corroding and compromising the mortar.[58]

Consistent with that construction process, the Faires Farm north silo was built using rows of concrete staves measuring 10 inches by 10 inches, each approximately three inches thick. Mortar was applied between the joints of the staves. The concrete stave portion of the north silo stands approximately 38 feet high; the metal domed roof adds another approximately six feet to the height of the overall structure, for a total approximate height of 44 feet. The chute on the north silo's front elevation – featuring an opening that measures 30 inches wide and 30 inches high within a three-inch-thick wall – is also comprised of concrete staves of the same dimensions as the silo's staves. The chute begins approximately eight feet from the silo's concrete foundation and continues vertically to the top of the masonry structure for a height of approximately 32 feet. The chute's conical roof is approximately three feet high, making the total approximate height of the chute 35 feet.

Notably, the north silo is not constructed entirely of concrete staves. The central portion of its front/west elevation that includes the north silo's chute and continuous door is a poured concrete frame measuring approximately five feet wide and six inches thick that extends the full vertical length of the masonry structure. That poured concrete frame serves multiple purposes. It provides a foundation and anchor for the silo's constituent horizontal rows of concrete staves. It is the structural to which both the chute and the unloading doors are affixed. It is the exterior surface to which the steel anchors for the steel reinforcement hoops are attached. Finally, it provides a makeshift ladder providing access to the upper reaches of the silo.

The continuous door within the poured concrete frame on the north silo's front/west elevation measures 18 inches wide and is spanned at regular intervals of approximately two feet by concrete lintels, each measuring approximately six inches high. Those lintels would have served as rungs for the makeshift ladder provided by the frame, and the opening they create would have been closed off using unloading doors. Each lintel appears to be bolstered by three steel reinforcement hoops. The openings created within the frame by those lintels measure approximately 18 inches wide and 23 inches high.

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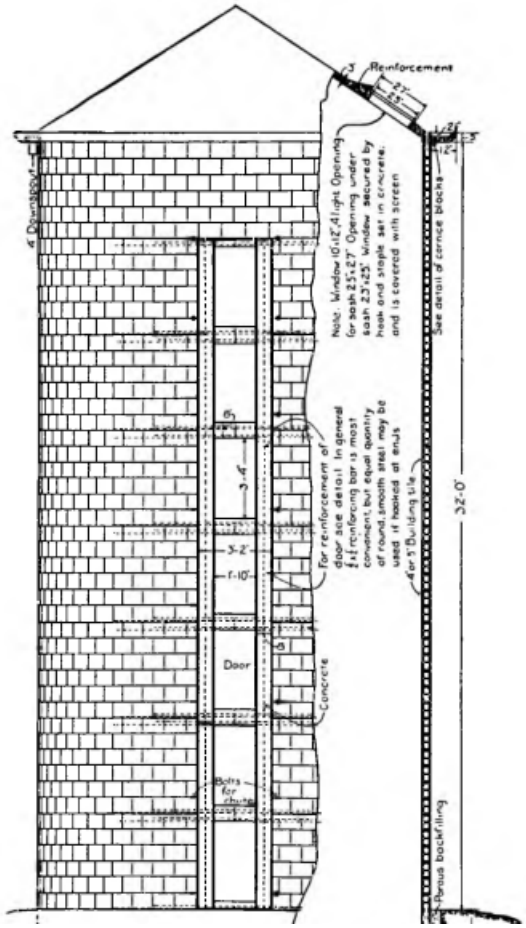
[58] Yesterday's Tractor Company, "Concrete Stave Silos," accessed December 3, 2025, https://forums.yesterdaystractors.com/threads/concrete-stave-silos.1149116/; Silo Pros, "What Are Silo Staves and Why Are They Important?," accessed December 3, 2025, https://silo-pros.com/blog/what-are-silo-staves/; Dennis Blauser, "Concrete Stave Silos," Marietta Silos, accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.mariettasilos.com/blog/14/concrete-stave-silos; Morning Ag Communications, "The Legacy of the Disappearing Silo," accessed December 3, 2025, https://www.morningagclips.com/the-legacy-of-the-disappearing-silo/#:~:text=Farmers%20began%20to%20use%20cement,technique%20is%20still%20used%20today.



Above and below: Illustrative images of a poured concrete frame for a concrete stave silo.[59]

[59] Agricultural Experiment Station, "Silo Construction," 131, 146.

North silo and chute – front/west and south elevation.

Above: Detail of poured concrete frame on north silo's front/west elevation. The top opening features the only remaining unloading door in the silo's continuous door. Below: Views of north silo's poured concrete frame showing placement of the chute and anchor fixtures for reinforcement hoops (left) and detail of an anchor fixture (right).

Below: One of the concrete lintels within the north silo's front elevation poured concrete frame that spans the silo's continuous door. Note the reinforcement hoops.

Starting at the north silo's ground level, 37 steel reinforcement hoops – each approximately 1.5 inches in diameter – encircle the concrete stave structure, spaced at intervals of approximately 6.5 inches. As the structure ascends, those intervals between the reinforcement hoops gradually increase, first to between seven to nine inches, then to between 10 to 12 inches before concluding at the upper reaches of the silo with four intervals, each measuring some 30 inches apart. With the exception of the five reinforcement hoops at the top of the concrete stave structure (which appear to be secured by steel lugs), the ends of each reinforcement hoop are inserted into 11 pairs of ascending metal anchor fixtures (each measuring 25 inches high by four inches wide) mounted on the exterior surface of the north silo's poured concrete frame and arranged vertically on opposite sides of the chute. Once inserted into an anchor, the end of each reinforcement hoop is secured using a one-inch-wide nut.

The north silo's chute differs in appearance and structure from the south silo. While the south silo's chute is rounded and therefore more truly semicircular, the north silo's chute is comprised of seven slightly angled sides which, when affixed to the silo's poured concrete frame, creates a slightly distorted octagonal shape as the continuous door of the silo's frame effectively provides an eighth "side." Like the north silo, its chute is bolstered by steel reinforcement hoops (a feature not used on the south silo's chute). However, the twelve reinforcement hoops of the north silo's chute do differ in appearance from the silo itself as they appear to be uniformly spaced (at intervals of approximately thirty inches) along the chute's span, likely because the chute does not bear the interior pressure to which the silo itself is subjected. Like the south silo, access to the interior of the north silo via both the chute and the ground level of the continuous door is currently blocked by welded flat steel bars and steel rebar affixed to the concrete structure

The interior storage area of the north silo measures some 18 feet in diameter. The interior of the north silo is parged with a thin layer of concrete.

Above: Interior walls of north silo.
Below: North elevation of north silo (left); south elevation of the silo (front).

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