

## 1946-1956: A Decade Of Progress



### Charlotte Close-Up

By JULIAN SCHEER

He stepped off the train at South-ern station and a cold wind, blowing out of the north like an icicle, whipped dust in his face and pulled hard at his coat.

He blinked in the early morning sun and walked gingerly across the tracks to the building. He stopped beside Track No. 1 and looked about. It was like coming out of a short, nervous sleep, for he felt he had been only dozing.

But Matt Alexander knew the dream had been 10 years long and it had been another cold January day in 1946 when he last saw his hometown of Charlotte.

It hasn't changed a bit, he said to himself as he looked at the smoky walls of the old station. Nope, he thought, they tell me you wouldn't recognize the place now, but I'd know Charlotte in my sleep. A city is like a disposition, he said, you can't change it once it gets rooted. You won't change Charlotte, not old Mecklenburg—that's for sure.

Matt started eastward on W. Trade St., walking slowly and looking at old familiar sites and streets. Traffic heavier, he thought, and cars are newer but Trade looks the same.

At the Post Office he caught sight of Sgt. Moore—how long has he been on the force? he thought—and he noticed the same recruiting posters outside and the same faces—well, they seemed like the same—on the people waiting on the corner for a bus.

And that bus, it's green and white. What happened, he wondered, to the orange-yellow buses? Why, I remember when the trolley line ran out Queens Rd. and a ride to the end of the line on Saturday was a must for the kids, he thought.

It was cold, and Matt figured he'd stop at Tenner's for coffee, but the restaurant was not there when he approached the second block of W. Trade. And on the next block, Southern Hardware—what a hangout that was—was gone, too.

But the Square looked like home.

Matt pulled a large gold watch out of his vest pocket to check it by "the clock" and saw a new one up there. A touch of nostalgia filled him for a moment, but he shrugged his shoulders and found a policeman and bus dispatcher to talk with.

The hat shop was still there and, yes, he was told Mr. Ivey still pulls the curtains on Sunday and Belk's was still booming and a lot of new shops had opened. But, all in all, the area around the Square looked mighty like home.

Matt rode a bus down E. Trade to City Hall and he stood on the edge of the green and looked at the building. No, it hadn't changed and he felt at home again. Courthouse was still there and this was Charlotte that had not felt the impact of progress.

Before long he spied George Livingston and Walter Franklin stopped to shake hands, and Dick Young hurried by and it was just like home all over again.

Matt hailed a taxi and the driver said, sure, he'd give him a tour. No, he said, those old houses on N. Tryon are coming down—the Hawkins place just recently and still others. Sid McAden's place is still there.

Things have really changed in 10 years, the driver told him, but Matt wasn't convinced—yet.

The Library was gone, just a hole in the ground, but it looked good to see the Barringer.

Then they headed out Independence Blvd. The Coliseum's dome sparkled in the sun and the Auditorium was a weird building for an old-time Charlottean.

Well, the Armory's good enough for me, Matt told the man, but soon he saw only ruins.

New buildings? Well, there's the Airport Terminal, Celanese hard by Morrocroft—never thought I'd live to

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EVERYONE WAS FEELING in a mood of bigness.

The Progress Edition's story was shaping up as one of expansiveness, of 10 years of growing and spreading out, of getting to be bigcityish.

So Photographer Jeep Hunter decided to bring us back down to earth. He sunk his feet squarely in the middle of our main street and "shrunk" the main drag.

You are looking at a picture of three long city blocks, taken five blocks away.

IT IS A PICTURE OF TRYON ST. from Stone-wall to the Square.

Here is what he did: He stood in the middle of S. Tryon St. at Stone-wall. He set a 400 mm. F 5.6 Kilar telephoto lens on a tripod. On the rear of the 16-inch lens he hooked a Leica camera.

At 11:30 a.m. he fired away. The camera's lens pulled everything in three city blocks into focus. Those cars are between Second and Third St.

Move over to the left side of the picture and start looking up.

YOU SEE THE POUND & MOORE BLDG., the Piedmont Bldg., Johnston Bldg., Commercial National Bank, Wachovia Bank & Trust—corner of 4th St.—Liberty Life Bldg., and all the way to the right you can see the Independence Bldg. on the northwest edge of the Square.

That's five of the city's busiest and most populated blocks, all in one photograph by a photographer with an idea.

## In 10 Years, Population Has Gone 'Way Up

Charlotte heads into its second post-war decade with progress through expansion the keyword.

Over the past 10 years the Queen City of the Carolinas has increased in size, population and economic base at an amazing rate.

Shopping centers are springing up all over like new sprouts of grass, the population, in brief, annexations and newcomers from other areas, zooms toward the 200,000 mark.

And the city limits reaches over toward the county borders.

Ten years ago Charlotte was a city of 20 square miles, barely over 100,000 population and with a sparse sprinkling of shopping centers.

The war was over, men and women came home from the service, and people from the north, midwest and south began looking to Charlotte as a place to settle. Came the boom!

As the city expanded, so did the population. Although there is no census taken between the 10-year periods, a fairly accurate estimate of the Queen City's population has been obtained from L. L. Ledbetter, the city treasurer.

### THE STATISTICS

Here is the box-score on Charlotte, largest city in the Carolinas, for the year 1955. These statistics represent either the total for the entire year, or the figure as of Dec. 31, 1955.

- Bank Deposits—\$692,299,444.
- Bank Clearings—\$7,559,168,453.32.
- Retail Sales—\$273,000,000.
- Post Office Receipts—\$4,682,159.86.
- Building Permits—\$10,647,704.
- Population—151,640 (according to City Treasurer L. L. Ledbetter); 157,200 (according to the Chamber of Commerce.)
- Area—32 square miles.
- Miles of City Streets—410.
- Water Consumption—5,429,721,000 gallons.
- Telephone Subscribers—58,289.
- Telephones in Use—83,143.

He estimates that the city came out of the war era with a population of 125,093 on Jan. 1, 1946. On succeeding Jan. 1st he estimates the city's population as follows:

- Jan. 1, 1947, 127,747.
- Jan. 1, 1948, 130,401.
- Jan. 1, 1949, 133,055.
- Jan. 1, 1950, 135,710.
- Jan. 1, 1951, 138,365.
- Jan. 1, 1952, 141,020.
- Jan. 1, 1953, 143,675.
- Jan. 1, 1954, 146,330.
- Jan. 1, 1955, 148,985.
- Jan. 1, 1956, 151,640.

The official census of Charlotte for 1950 was 134,042 as compared with the 1940 figure of 100,899.

There is another estimate for the present population of Charlotte, that of the city's Chamber of Commerce which says that the Queen City now has a population of 157,200.

In this past decade there have been two periods of annexation by the city which have added to the population. In 1949 there was a 10-square mile extension of the city limits, which jumped the size of Charlotte to 30 square miles. Since that time there have been 23 smaller annexations amounting to two square miles.

Since World War II, shopping

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### CITY'S STORY IS EXCITING

By CHARLES KURALT

Charlotte News Staff Writer

Think about Charlotte, the big, proud city, the hub with long spokes over two states.

But use your imagination. Do not think about Charlotte as it is, but picture it without, say, the concrete ribbon of Independence Blvd.

Think about it without the green acres of Freedom Park, without the mammoth, modernistic Auditorium-Coliseum or the airport terminal or the Jefferson Standard Building.

Conceive of the city minus 17 schools, 500 stores and 50,000 people. Take away Franklin, Edison and Express, take away a couple of dozen churches and most of the suburb shopping centers. Take away most of the suburbs.

Reduce the city limits several blocks on all sides. Take the television sets from every house where there is one.

Now you are beginning to get there. Take away the Methodist Home, four radio stations, Sears-Roebuck's block-long building and the Red Cross Blood Bank.

Remove the Army Reserve Training Center and the Naval Armory. Put a big house on the corner of Central Ave. and The Plaza in place of Harris Super Market.

Think about the city without ABC stores, Radio Center or such a thing as United Appeal. Cut bus fares in half. Narrow down a dozen four-lane streets to two lanes, reduce a few more, like the throbbing Industrial mainline, Atandt Ave., to dirt lanes, and take away a batch of one-way streets.

Take women off juries. Imagine pine woods where the county's great, consolidated high schools stand. Take away the Nike plant. Change the face of midtown, the Grant store, the Efland's front, Ivey's, Belk's, Liggett's at the Square.

Make 10,000 other changes in the sprawling city, changes in brick and glass and steel, and changes in people. Take 10 years off your life and the lives of everyone you know.

Think of the city that way and what you have when you are finished is Charlotte, still, but Charlotta on Jan. 31, 1946—10 years ago today.

Charlotte doesn't have much experience at this looking backward. Every time you try to look back in Charlotte, the red structural steel of some new building gets in the way. And even for people who have lived through the past 10 years right here, it is hard to remember Charlotte as it was.

Not that we do not have a proud past. But Charlotte, which is proud of such an old thing as the monument to the Mecklenburg Declaration signers in front of the Courthouse, is prouder still of the spanking clean, brand new, big-domed Coliseum on Independence Blvd.

So the key words to the decade, if such there must be, are "change" and "growth" and "progress." Familiar words, hereabouts.

For in the past 10 years, there have been more people in Charlotte than ever before in history. And more money, more buying and selling, more coming and going.

If there was ever any doubt that this is a businessmen's town, the past 10 years have erased it. Some cities find their callings as seats of government or tourist centers or fortresses of culture. Business is our business.

But along with multiplying wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing and distributing goes a greater need for recreation, traffic control, government expansion and a bewildering variety of services ranging from banking to building.

That is part of the story of Charlotte since Jan. 31, 1946.

Another part has to do with people, big and little. Clarence Kuester, for example, who knew what Charlotte ought to be and helped point us that

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# Look Back 10 Years, And You See Progress

## Story Of Our Town Tells Of Growth

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Or David Owens, John J. Parker or J. Norman Pease, or Julian Massi, who won a Soap Box Derby, or such a name as "Sweetpea" Stover, who shot his lover to death on a busy street corner. It takes a lot of people to make a city.

And there is more: All the human successes, fears, foibles and failings that have put whisky, smoke, and the United Appeal, the fight against polio, the butter and eggs racket, the vigor of birth, the sadness of death on the front pages since Jan. 31, 1946.

Try to remember how it was that day. The war was still around; the returning veterans, the shortage of goods, the price controls. A few gold stars still hung in a few windows. The aches and pains of reconstruction were still fresh from the palms of war, but they were also real.

The first great boom was for living space. Morris Field barracks were handed over to the city and converted into the grand apartments. On the night before applications were to be received, the line started forming. It was a boom, the way down the block and around the corner and the city woke up next morning with the fact that some housing was needed, more housing than a handful of makeshift apartments beside an air strip.

The building boom that started in 1946 was here and there, Charlotte started building neighborhoods. It was a boom to catch up with demand and it is still going on. Eventually, it began to show results in the form of streets like Sedgewick, Tryon Hills, Westwood, Morningside Apartments, Selwyn Village, Plaza Hills, Scotland, Tokay, and Double Oaks and others, some new, some a part of older neighborhoods.

But it takes time to build houses and apartments. And 10 years ago today, Charlotte was feeling the squeeze. Noting the beginnings of what looked to be a fantastic growth, heads in government and civic life went to work to relieve some of the tightening bottlenecks in housing. And in the past, recreation and transportation too.

The first steps toward a viable postwar zoning plan were made in 1946. The city council decided Charlotte needed to grow in a planned way, so a decision was made to ask the General Assembly for an enabling act to make the city limits. A standard house ordinance was passed, requiring heating, lighting and bathing facilities in every dwelling unit.

New automobiles were replacing the war-worn buggies of every citizen in town during 1946 and 1947, and the experts viewed the boom. Somebody suggested a cross-town thoroughfare. It would take the whole downtown traffic and cause a prolonged ruckus in the process, but independence Blvd. was on the way.

The Lions Club, with one eye on the future and another on a great, unexplored tract of land off East Blvd., came up with another master plan that was to become Freedom Park.

The years 1946 and 1947 were years of the forward look. Some of the things Charlotteans were talking about then—things like city-county government consolidation and the need for added air service, the smog problem—were to keep making news all through the decade. Some are not yet under the bridge. But these were the years of beginnings.

Charlotte College, of the University of North Carolina was ministering to the educational wants of the floods of returned G.I.s.

The Jaycee Jollies, born in '46 reflected the new gusto of the times.

Hamilton C. Jones beat the man in the southern states. The Barkholder, and went to Congress. U. S. Circuit Judge John J. Parker went for the Nazi war crimes trials.

And if Georgia had two governors, if there still wasn't enough rib roast to go around, if "Lena the Hyena" was sufficient to disturb your sleep, who cared? Things were running good and clearly getting better.

By 1947, those new neighborhoods were coming off the planners' blueprint boards and rising out of the ground. The retailers started going out to them. Beside the familiar neighborhood drug stores, filling stations and grocery stores, there grew up in 1947 the first department stores, beauty shops, variety stores, jewelry and clothing stores, theaters, bars, and restaurants and a host of other sophisticated shops were born in 1947.

There were 129,000 people living in Charlotte in 1947. Wholesale sales passed \$1 billion for the first time and retail sales, aided by the new stores in the suburbs, reached a new high of \$1.6 billion. Bank clearings topped \$10 billion.

ABC stores announced \$10 million in gross sales for the first year of operation. Mecklenburg's first woman juror was drawn and found the job "exciting."

And we kept on growing. Bank clearings hit \$4 billion in 1948. And as for the banks themselves they were beginning to follow the grocery stores and dress shops into their customers' back yards. American Trust Co. had four branch banks opened or planned. Union National had four, Wachovia Two and Commercial one. Downtown banking headquarters all expanded.

The new business meant more traveling, of course, and hotels sprang up to keep up with the spiraling influx of commercial travelers. They spent more than \$2 million in expanding and reconditioning, much of it in 1948.

Lining the approaches to the city, there sprang up new, convenient accommodations for motorists and another new word, "motel," found widespread usage in the Charlotte language. Twenty-six motels were built in Charlotte's environs during the decade, adding 524 rooms to the 1,770 available in 17 midtown hotels.

By now, the cars were flowing freely from the production lines—and not through the streets. Somebody estimated there were 20,000 new cars clogging the city and most motorists figured that was a low estimate. There were 20,000 cars stopped at every stoplight.

Those thousand islands of Engineer House were working well, but all those family cars, plus hundreds of trucks based at 70 motor freight lines in Charlotte, plus thousands of other trucks and buses and tractor-trailers added up to a substantial headache and Charlotte devised a \$5 million program for unbolting streets, separating motor traffic from railroads and opening dead ends.

The situation was eased a little by the opening of the first link of Independence Blvd. It opened without a name, became Independence in due time) in 1949—the year, also, of political news, crime news and the un-draping of the compelling, 21-inch magic window by WBTV.

Five Mecklenburgers went to Raleigh to represent the county in the General Assembly. Sen. Joe Byrde died in the capital in January. Frank P. Graham, a former Charlottean, went to Washington as U. S. Senator. Deborah, the dealer Victor Shaw, swept into the mayor's office, defeating Mayor Herbert H. Baxter overwhelmingly.

Mrs. Mary Wooten was shot to death on a street corner by Watson "Sweetpea" Stover; Mrs. Mildred Ross Wallace killed her husband Marvin and claimed, "I didn't know the gun was loaded"; and Mrs. Ealey O. Anderson, a Queens Rd. matron, was killed mysteriously. A former builder, Monroe Medlin, later confessed to the crime.

Duke Power upped bus fares to 10 cents, three tokens for a quarter, an incendiary bomb was thrown at the Boars Head Restaurant, a crime for which Johnny Kimbro and Jimmy Ekardt paid with prison terms; Sears Roebuck moved into its huge Tryon St. building.

A coal strike found the city shivering in November weather; and the news was relayed in Washington that Charlotte was being considered as the site for the new Air Force academy—one of the few fights the city lost during the decade.

Visitors to town included Gov. Kerr Scott, who said Mecklenburgers were "acting like spoiled babies" in voting against his road and school bond program; Dr. Elmer H. Goring, who succeeded him; Ellis Blumenthal and Al Goodman, prominent Charlotteans who were sentenced to prison for attempted evasion of income taxes; W. R. Price, the new moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S.; and Hattie Wall, who gave her baby away to a stranger on a city street.

It was about this time that a cafe owner advised, "Guaranteed, worst Coffee In Town, Five Cents," and coffee drinkers, oppressed by the 10 cent price, beat a path to his door. The City Council decided to enforce all provisions of the taxicab ordinance, to fix rates for meters and to stop rentals of cabs by companies to individual drivers.

In November, 1949, a committee was named to study location and design of a proposed new city auditorium. It took six years and \$44 million, but the committee did its job.

It didn't take a census-taker to convince Charlotte that it was going places by 1950. But when the census and accompanying polls and surveys and resulting tables of statistics were tallied up, they told a story, and Charlotte learned some things about itself.

There were 133,212 people in town, almost 90,000 of them at work earning \$795 million a year. Their children in school numbered 21,000. The stores were selling \$210 million worth of goods, an increase of about \$70 million over 1946.

Wholesale sales were up to the staggering total of \$1,200,000,000 per year. Charlotte, 69th in population, was now 29th in distribution, looking down on cities like Richmond, Louisville, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, just a shade behind Denver and New Orleans.

Bank clearings jumped \$1 billion in one year and reached \$5 billion by 1950. There were 70,000 electric meters in use, a jump of 10,000 from the year before. And 5,000 telephones. Charlotte had a net effective buying income of more than \$6,000 per family, almost \$2,000 more than the rest of the state.

By 1950, Charlotte had 1,700 retail stores, offering everything from monkeys to Cadillacs for sale. There were 450 food stores and 379 cafes and restaurants. And the stores were changing. There were improvements at Belk's, preliminary to the big addition now going up, plus a new buying service. Melons had renovated, Ivey's was spending a million dollars sprucing up its interior and Edler's was planning a similar project.

Government in Charlotte and Mecklenburg was running hard to keep up with all the spreading population, its demands and its problems.

## THE MAYOR SPEAKS

By PHIL VAN EVERY  
Mayor, City of Charlotte

In giving a "progress report" in the Mayor's Office, I feel there is no need to point out the tangibles which reflect the phenomenal growth of this community. Our interest should rest not in these evidences—but in the explanation for their being.



MAYOR VAN EVERY

I believe that the high principles of leadership imbedded in the personalities of the citizens of Charlotte are responsible for the city's growth, for without the dedicated leadership of men with religious backgrounds and a feeling of civic pride and responsibility, none of these things would have happened.

A city is only as strong and progressive as the individuals who inhabit it. So long as we build a reservoir of good leaders in our community, our continued progress and success will be assured.

The success story of the Charlotteans is the success story of the city itself. There has been no sacrifice of the spiritual leadership of men to gain a higher standard of living. The citizens of our community have given substantial proof of their desire to progress by their generous contributions to the economic well being of the community. Ours is a charitable community. We rate high in the nation as "a city of churches." Our expanding educational facilities warrant community pride. And—we are grateful for the recognition Charlotte is gaining as a cultural center.

The future progress of Charlotte is in the hands of those who have faith in our community—and who will assume their responsibilities as good citizens to serve the community. No limitations can be placed on our growth so long as we have qualified leaders whose high principles are shared with others in all phases of community activity.

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## STOWE MOODY SAYS:

By STOWE MOODY  
President, Chamber of Commerce

The City Council authorized the Housing Authority to build 600 apartments for families who couldn't afford private homes. The Fire Department installed a super-duper alarm system and the county efficient volunteer fire groups were dotting the landscape. The County Police Dept. increased 70 per cent of its effort toward slowing down Mecklenburg's zooming traffic. The city opened a Pet Dept. for the service of dogs, cats, parakeets, lambs and their masters.

County government was spreading into every nook and cranny inside and outside the Courthouse. There was talk in 1950 of a new building to house some of the county agencies. (There is still talk.)

The big news of 1950 was the calendar. This was a halfway mark. A half-century was over. A half-decade of progress was over, and the end was not yet.

The seven new manufacturing plants located last year will add annually over \$7,000,000 to local payroll, over \$4,000,000 to retail sales and more than \$3,000,000 to bank deposits. Their most important contribution to our economy may be the diversification of the products which they will manufacture, several of which will be manufactured in the South for the first time. New products to be manufactured are dental and optical equipment, finished brass products, baking pans and glass missiles.

The completed projects made news in 1951. Even as the Korean war filled the front pages, the hopes and plans of the post-World War II days began to come true. The finishing touches were put on Myers Park High School and far away, the tall spire of the Myers Park Baptist Church rose into the sky.

Other churches were still a building, including Covenant Presbyterian, a \$2½ million edifice of stone.

Plantation Pipe Line Co. opened a new pipe that could furnish the city with 10 million gallons of oil. The underpass was completed on Stonewall St.

But there was no such thing as building being finished in Charlotte. Not in this decade, 1951 was also the year Celanese announced plans for its new building on the Cameron Morrison estate in Sharon community.

More construction: Work got underway on a new Sugar Creek disposal plant (with accompanying hopes that the Big Stink of the Little Sugar might be eliminated) and contracts were awarded on the first phase of the big terminal construction plan at the airport, construction that was eventually to replace a clappedshank wharf with one of the nation's most modern terminal buildings.

Transcontinental Pipeline was bringing natural gas to town in a transcontinental pipeline. The great county school consolidation program spread in all directions. East, North and West—and schools by those names replace smaller county high schools.

T. Lamar Caudle, making news in Washington said he "heard for his life" every time he visited Charlotte. But Saturday Evening Post and Life Magazine staffers weren't scared away. Both magazines did stories on the city. Life's on the Debate! Ball. Former Mayor Herbert H. Baxter got elected

made the first telephone call over Southern Bell's new microwave relay system. Ford Motor Co. announced plans for a \$14 million parts depot. Stonewall St. opened. The federal government lifted building restrictions, granting Charlotte permission to proceed on its Auditorium-Columbus (to which A-C Committee Chairman James P. McMillan replied, "We'll do it," a quotation somehow watermarked on all the pages of the Charlotte story since 1946.) A bigger and better East 36th St. was opened to traffic; the widening of The Plaza and Selwyn Ave. was projected, and a development called "Cotswold" was announced for Sharon-Atty.

Cotswold was significant. The \$8 million houses—apartments—shopping center project marked the outer limits of a "second ring" of Charlotte development since the war.

Those who took the trouble to look could see the pattern clearly: First, there was the burst of suburban home building. Then, the rise of a ring of neighborhood shopping centers such as the Manor center on Providence Rd. and the Colony Center on Selwyn Ave., to name two examples.

Even before those shopping centers were complete, the rest

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Jefferson Standard Broadcasting Co.

# COLLOSSUS of the CAROLINAS

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