



## THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

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### In The Smallest Particle Of Matter, The Largest Measure Of Promise

**I**F TAR HEELS appeared to be basking in the afterglow of a radioactive tizzy today it was small wonder. News that Charlotteans plan to construct a multi-million-dollar nuclear reactor in Anson County apparently did more for the area's morale than anything since the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

The cheer was compounded of visions of cold cash. At a time when there had been some dependency about the economic outlook, the announcement was particularly bracing.

It is not that one plant with a few hundred employees can conjure up a boom of unimaginable prosperity. The excitement is caused more by the nature of the plant and the promise of more plants and fresh development in an exciting new field of human endeavor.

They tell us that the history of the world is replete with the shortsightedness of man. The caveman failed to appreciate the significance of fire. It was centuries before the wheel got any widespread attention. And a half century ago nobody really thought the horseless carriage would amount to anything—although one particularly brash Earl

Coaster predicted that the day would come when there would be "several hundred" horseless carriages in all the big cities.

To some degree, it has been much the same story with nuclear energy. Its infinite possibilities, its capacity to revolutionize industry and agriculture alike, have only been dimly appreciated in the United States.

The investors, the industrialists, the scientists and the people in the streets of North Carolina and the South cannot afford to nod with the nation in heavy-lidded apathy. The atom can mean the economic emancipation of the South. It offers opportunities which must be seized here and now if the region is to realize fully its great promise.

It will take the kind of risk capital the Charlotte businessmen who formed Industrial Testing Reactors Inc. were willing to put up. It will take bold new experimentation in atomic power such as Duke Power Co. has in mind. It will take educational pioneering such as the Consolidated University of North Carolina has already begun to launch. It will take imaginative enterprises such as North Carolina's Research Triangle.

But in each field, more will have to be accomplished if significant progress is to be made.

As far as the South as a region is concerned, Gov. Leroy Collins of Florida spelled out the real challenge not long ago in a speech in Alabama.

We are making great progress all over the South, but we should not let our gains lead us into any false sense of security. We are not out of the woods by any means. Industry-wise, the South is still an infant. Despite our recent industrial growth, the South actually may be in serious danger of being left behind the rest of the nation.

Now, however, with the advent of the atomic age, the whole picture of industrial life and the future of the South will be changed... Left to chance, nuclear

energy for industrial use will gravitate to the existing industrial areas, mostly in the North... The challenge to the South is to make industry follow the atom, and not stand idle and permit the atom to follow existing industry. If we are to bring the atom to the South, it will take immediate... action... on a bold and progressive scale beyond anything yet attempted.

Yesterday's announcement meant this immediate area could chalk up a handsome score. It meant progress. It meant that the infinite possibilities of the atom were being cooly and accurately assessed at last. But the hurrahs and hoop-la could not conceal the fact that a great deal remains to be done before the atom finds a permanent home in Dixie. Mr. Collins' vision is still undisturbed by reality.

Greenboro school officials declined to give out grades of any pupil. But it is well known in the community that the single Negro girl in senior high school was on the honor roll for the first semester, that one student at Gillespie (where five were enrolled) hadn't made passing grades, another made the honor roll, and three others ran the scale of academic standing in between those extremes.

**A FATHER'S VIEW**

Hilton Perry, Randolph Street in Greenboro, one of the white parents who was, and is, opposed,

made this comment on the Schlesinger record: "As far as the children getting along in the school, I don't think they ever will, in numbers. I have three children, one in class with a Negro girl. They (the Negroes) go to the same cafeteria but they don't associate with their classmates and I don't see how they can be happy."

Perry said, however, the Negroes manage to go to school with all the same feelings with all the same extreme unpleasantness. "But the lack of fellowship, the loneliness, must be terrible. Their performance academically doesn't seem outstanding, although they are thought to have been chosen because they were outstanding in their own schools," he added. Perry said one effect was that people were moving out of his neighborhood.

**WHITE CHILD HOMESICK**  
J. Howard Cockman, 519 Arlington Street, hasn't changed in his opposition to the move at Gillespie school. He was among the parents who proceeded under a provision of the Pearsall Plan to get transfers for six white children from Gillespie to other schools when it was known the Negroes would be enrolled there. But now Cockman's daughter is back at Gillespie. She overcame her parents' opposition to her going to school with Negro pupils because, in Cockman's words, "she's back now at Gillespie because she was homesick for her friends there. She's in the eighth grade."

How did she feel about going to school with Negroes? "Said Cockman: 'She was brought up in the church and her feelings about being in the school were not as strong as possibly mine or her mother's.'"

One of the Negro pupils is in the eighth grade. But Cockman noted "when my daughter went back to Gillespie she had a single class with a Negro student. She's not in close contact with the Negro students," Cockman said. "I don't think she's as close as formerly and they are accepted in the school. Prospects of a good school in the area that may alleviate future school segregation has served to ease the situation."

Dr. Smith, Superintendent of Greenboro schools (soon to retire) comments only that the Negro students are "doing about as well as their previous records would indicate," academically. School officials have been getting cooperation from parents of

request transfer for their children from Central High to segregated schools. They got one response, and it was withdrawn.

**STUDENT IS ACCEPTED**

Since then there has been no open parental opposition. Gus Roberts has been accepted as a part of the academic life at the school. He is an honor roll student and put it this way: "No one takes any notice of him. As far as social functions go, you never know there was a Negro in the school. Most students realize what happened in Little Rock and wouldn't want it to happen here."

Gus had a difficult time academically. An "A" and "B" student at the Negro Second Ward High School, he made three "C's" and two "F's" his first semester at Central High. He failed subjects were geometry and physics. Gus talks freely about this, blaming it on inadequate mathematical preparation at Second Ward. School officials agree the quality of his work has picked up, and credit this to his own effort. He often spends most of his lunch hour in the library studying.

**MEMBER OF CHORUS**

The other two Charlotte Negro students' grades have dropped from above average to average marks. Fourteen-year-old Girard Roberts, small for her age, is the only Negro student at Charlotte's Piedmont Junior High School. A teacher describes her as "immature." Early in the year she spent play periods with the Negro maid at the school but the principal halted the practice.

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