

# THANK YOU

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Heritage Committee would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Historic Charlotte for co-funding, producing and distributing the African American Heritage Tour Brochure. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Arts and Science Council for their generous support by also co-funding the project.

The Black Heritage Committee has long recognized the need for a brochure highlighting historic African American sites and we are particularly grateful to Leora McAuliffe for leading this project while serving as a member of the Black Heritage Committee. We would also like to thank Tom Hanchett, Dr. Dan Morrill, the Historic Landmarks Commission and the staff of the Carolina Room at Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County for their excellent research and documentation of the history of significant African American structures.

We trust the information contained in this brochure will be of great educational and historical significance to the Charlotte community. The brochure will allow students, life-long learners and those interested in black history to learn about the vital role African Americans and their institutions have played in Charlotte's rich history.

We were honored to work with Historic Charlotte on this important project. The Black Heritage Committee looks forward to working with this esteemed organization as partners in future efforts.

Sincerely,

Everett E. Blackmon  
*Chairman,*  
*Charlotte Mecklenburg Black Heritage Committee*



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## African American Heritage Driving Tour



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# A Brief Historical Sketch of African American Presence in Mecklenburg County

BY DR. DAN MORRILL



The written history of Mecklenburg County spans over two hundred years, from its eighteenth century origins as a backwoods trading crossroads and courthouse town to its current modern identity as a regionally recognized marketing, commercial, and transportation center. African Americans have been an integral part of the county's population since its establishment; many citizens owned slaves and several planters operated sizeable plantations. Although dwarfed by the more successful and wealthy "aristocratic" economies in South Carolina and Virginia, North Carolina and Mecklenburg County were fully entrenched in the cotton economy of the nineteenth century. Until the early nineteenth century, the area was stymied by a poor infrastructure and inadequate water transport. Although a strong producer of cotton and other crops, Mecklenburg County initially suffered from its distance to regional markets and ports.

This changed in the late 1840s when prominent citizens of the county had the foresight to promote investment in a railroad. The first rail line was completed in 1852, and on the eve of the Civil War, four railroads served Mecklenburg County. The significance of the advent of the railroad cannot be overstated; rail links provided the only cost-effective connections to outside markets for the county's farmers, merchants, manufacturers and consumers.

As the railroads made the economy more robust, the county's White, African, and African American population increased. By 1860 slaves accounted for approximately 40% of the county population, but physical relics of this substantial demographic component are now almost totally non-existent. Written references to slaves in the records of local slave owning families are also rare. Auctions were advertised in the newspapers, as were notices of runaways and town ordinances that applied only to slaves.

While generally disruptive and costly in human and monetary resources, the Civil War did not directly adversely affect Mecklenburg. Sheltered in the piedmont hinterland, Mecklenburg was never invaded or occupied. Local merchants took advantage of opportunities to capitalize on war contracts and as a consequence, by the end of the war, the county stood in good shape to resume its commercial and agricultural activities. The post-bellum world was fraught with unpleasant social and economic changes for nearly all levels of society. Whites seemed more disposed to react adversely to blacks during Reconstruction and in the years that followed. Planters had to learn to make do without slaves, whites had to adjust to blacks as free people, and ultimately as citizens, and blacks had to learn to navigate the uncertain waters of their new status. The extant built resources relevant to Mecklenburg's African American population date from the late nineteenth century and after.

In addition to planters' concerns about securing sufficient labor, the former ruling elite was preoccupied with the restoration of their political and economic ascendancy and with the reversal of any democratic gains made during reconstruction. The general social and economic unease prevalent after the Civil War was ultimately articulated in the disfranchisement and Jim Crow laws of late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As racial divisions formalized by the turn of the century, blacks found themselves sequestered from the social mainstream in every conceivable aspect. In the rural world, they were mostly confined to sharecropping, although there are notable documented instances of landed African American farmers who managed large farms that were competitive with neighboring white farmers.

In Charlotte, blacks were segregated into residential sections and had a separate commercial district centered on Brevard Street, adjacent to the locus of the white commercial hub on the principal commercial arteries of Trade and Tryon Streets. Many of these businesses were

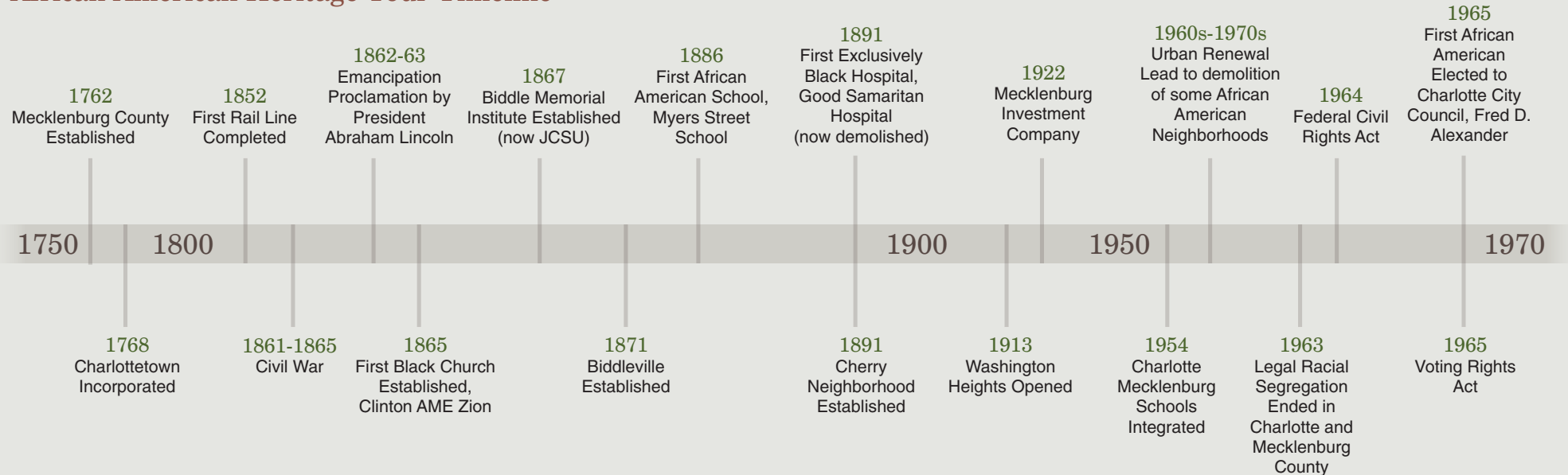
created around the newly established African American churches that became safe havens for a people under siege from angry whites seeking new ways to keep blacks "in their place."

Blacks were also segregated in terms of occupations and where they could work. The black middle class was small in the early twentieth century; most African Americans worked in blue-collar skilled and semi-skilled jobs. Blacks rarely worked in textile mills, and when they did, they were never alongside whites. In an unusual bid for labor, the Hoskins Mill built six mill houses for African American workers, and located these houses on the opposite side of the mill from the significantly larger white mill village. The workers who lived in these houses worked in the boiler room, or as janitors or on the loading docks, and did not typically share their work environment with white mill operatives.

In spite of the existence of discrete black and white business sections, urban residential patterns in Charlotte were not rigidly defined. Blacks and whites lived in "salt and pepper" configurations in the various wards and neighborhoods. This pattern continued until after the Second World War. Increased suburbanization and demand for housing caused a white flight from the city center. Post war urban development and suburban growth spelled disaster for Charlotte's historic urban black neighborhoods, which either deteriorated over time as the residents aged-out or were demolished to make room for expansion in the center city. There are few vestiges of these neighborhoods left in Charlotte and even fewer examples of such neighborhoods extant in the incorporated townships of the county. The best nearly intact example is found in Davidson. Fragments of such neighborhoods remain in Huntersville, Cornelius, and Matthews. If any African American neighborhoods existed in southeast Mecklenburg, they have long since vanished in the wake of massive suburban development. The same is true for unincorporated places annexed by Charlotte.

By the 1950s, segregated residential patterns were firmly established. Some African American housing developments were built in North Mecklenburg to accommodate the displaced middle and professional classes who previously lived in town. The black urban population increased since the 1950s as the post-war boom created more jobs, and sharecropping and tenant farming were abandoned in the interest of better jobs in town.

## African American Heritage Tour Timeline



## African American Heritage Tour Driving Directions

This driving tour is designed to give an overview of many significant African American sites within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. The culturally rich and fascinating history is explored through both residential and commercial structures. Directions between the sites may not be the shortest distance or most direct route but rather provide an opportunity to meander through the historic neighborhoods and fully experience the areas. Many of the neighborhoods appear much like they did when constructed; others have undergone urban renewal. Today, the proximity to uptown has again made these neighborhoods a desirable place to live and revitalization is taking hold. As you drive the tour, take note of the restoration taking place on the charming bungalows and Craftsman style homes. Some areas are experiencing neighborhood reinvestment through new construction.

The entire tour is roughly 55 miles long. It will take 2.5 to 3 hours without stopping. Each site number corresponds to a picture on the inside of the brochure with a brief statement about the historical significance. The tour begins at Latta Plantation located approximately 15 miles north of Uptown Charlotte and ends at the W.T. Alexander Slave Burial Ground.

### 1. Latta Plantation, 1800

5225 Sample Road / Huntersville, NC 28078

From Uptown take I-77 North, exit 16B toward Sunset Road. The exit is marked with brown signs to indicate parks and recreational sites. Turn right off of the exit ramp onto Sunset Road. Drive 0.5 miles and turn right on Beatties Ford Road. Follow the signs to Latta Plantation and the Carolina Raptor Center. Continue down Beatties Ford Road for about 5 miles and turn left onto Sample Road. Follow signs to the Carolina Raptor Center on your left. Continue traveling 0.6 miles past the Raptor Center entrance and turn right into the gravel parking lot at Latta Plantation. If you have time, park and take a tour of the plantation. There is a small fee for adult and student admission; ages 5 and under are free. Latta is open Tuesday- Saturday from 10am-5pm and Sunday from 1-5pm. Guided house tours are available Tuesday-Saturday hourly from 11am-4pm and Sundays from 2-4pm. Please check out the Historic Latta Plantation website at [www.lattaplantation.org](http://www.lattaplantation.org) for a complete listing of upcoming events.

### 2. Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 1833

10500 Beatties Ford Road / Huntersville, NC 28078

Drive back down Sample Road until it ends. Turn right onto Beatties Ford Road. Take an immediate left into the church parking lot. Take a right onto the small paved road which loops around the cemetery and offers multiple vantage points of the church. The loop is approximately 0.3 miles.

### 3. West Charlotte High School, c. 1938

1415 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

From the church parking lot, turn left onto Beatties Ford Road. After about 5 miles you will cross over Sunset Road. Stay on Beatties Ford Road for an additional 4 miles. The school will be on your right. It now houses the Northwest School of the Arts.

### 4. Davenport House, c. 1920

1223 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

Continue down Beatties Ford Road and look immediately to your right. The Davenport House is a two-story brick building on the corner of Beatties Ford Road and Dundeen Street.

### 5. Wilson House, c. 1915

2328 Sanders Avenue / Charlotte, NC 28216

At the next light, after the Davenport House, take a right onto Booker Avenue. Take the second left onto Redbud Street. Follow to the end. Look left, the Wilson House is on the corner of Redbud Street and Sanders Avenue.

### 6. Excelsior Club, c. 1910

921 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

From Redbud Street turn left onto Sanders Avenue. The Excelsior Club is on the right at the corner of Sanders Avenue and Beatties Ford Road.

### 7. United House of Prayer, est. 1926

601 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

Turn right onto Beatties Ford Road from Sanders Avenue. You will pass in front of the Excelsior Club. Look to your right, the United House of Prayer is a brightly-colored red, white and blue church with multiple steeples.



8. Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, c. 1921

408-416 Campus Street / Charlotte, NC 28216

Continue on Beatties Ford Road at the light turn right onto French Street. Take your first left onto Campus Street. The church is located on your left.

9. George E. Davis House, c. 1890

301 Campus Street / Charlotte, NC 28216

Continue down Campus Street. The Davis House is on the right corner of Campus and Dixon Streets.

10. Grand Pearl Theater, c. 1928

333 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

At the stop sign, turn right onto Dixon Street. Take a left onto Solomon Street. Turn right onto West Trade Street and then turn right onto Mill Street. The Grand Pearl Theater, a large two-story, brick building, is on your right at the intersection of Mill Street and Beatties Ford Road.

11. Johnson C. Smith University, est. 1867

100 Beatties Ford Road / Charlotte, NC 28216

Turn right, back onto Beatties Ford Road, you will drive in front of the Pearl Theater. Take a left onto Dixon Street at the stop light. This is the entrance into JCS University. Park and walk around the campus or proceed driving on the road around the university. There are several historic landmarks on the JCS campus, including Biddle Memorial Hall (1883), Carter Hall (1895) and the Carnegie Library (1911).

12. Clinton Chapel AME Zion, est. 1865

1901 Rozzelles Ferry Road / Charlotte, NC 28208

Exit the campus and turn left onto Beatties Ford Road. Take a right at the next light onto Rozzelles Ferry Road. Turn left onto Whitehaven Avenue for a better view of the church.

13. Seventh Street United Presbyterian Church, c. 1895

400 N. College Street / Charlotte, N.C. 28202

At the corner of Whitehaven Avenue and State Street, take a right. Turn left onto Mahopac Street and take another left onto Bruns Avenue at the stop sign. Turn right onto West Trade Street. Drive approximately 1.5 miles through uptown and turn left onto North College Street. Proceed down North College Street. The large, brick church is located on the corner of 7th Street and North College Street.

14. Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church, c. 1911

403 N. Myers Street / Charlotte, NC 28202

Turn right onto 7th Street. You are now entering First Ward. Pass in front of the Seventh Street United Presbyterian Church. Drive less than 0.25 miles and turn left onto North Caldwell Street. Take a right on East 8th Street and drive another 0.25 miles. Turn right onto Myers Street; it dead ends in front of the church which is now known as the Afro-American Cultural Center. Turn right into the parking lot. Please check local listings or the African American Cultural Center website at [www.aacc-charlotte.org](http://www.aacc-charlotte.org) for upcoming events. The shotgun houses, located behind the former church, are open to the public on Tuesday-Saturday from 10 am to 6pm. Admission is \$5. The facility is also open on Sundays from 1-5pm, and admission is free.

15. Grace A.M.E. Zion Church, c. 1902

219 South Brevard Street / Charlotte, NC 28202

16. Mecklenburg Investment Company Building, c. 1922

233-237 S. Brevard Street / Charlotte, NC 28202

Turn right out of the parking lot and onto 7th Street. Take another right on Alexander Street and a right on East 8th Street. Turn right onto McDowell Street. Drive less than 0.5 miles and turn right onto East 4th Street. Continue for approximately 0.5 miles and turn left onto South Brevard Street. You are now entering Second Ward, also known as Brooklyn. Look left for the Grace A.M.E. Zion Church and the Mecklenburg Investment Company which is next door.

17. Morgan School, c. 1925

500 South Torrence Street / Charlotte, NC 28204

Turn left onto MLK Drive at the stop light and proceed to the end. Turn left onto South McDowell Street and take a right at the next light onto East 3rd Street. Crossover Charlottetown Avenue and take the next right onto South Torrence Street. You are now entering the Cherry Neighborhood. Continue down Torrence Street until it intersects with Baxter Street. The Morgan School is on the right.

18. Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, c. 1896

1605 Luther Street / Charlotte, NC 28204

Turn left onto Baxter Street at the stop sign in front of the school. Take the next left onto Baldwin Avenue. Turn right onto Luther Street and look to your left.

19. Billingsville School, c. 1927

3100 Leroy Street / Charlotte, NC 28205

Proceed down Luther Street until it ends. Turn left onto Queens Road. Take a right onto East 4th Street at the light; this becomes Randolph Road. Turn left onto Sam Drenan Road at the light; the turn is directly across from the entrance to the Mint Museum. Turn right onto Leroy Street at the brown sign indicating you are now in the Grier Heights Neighborhood. The Billingsville School is on your right. Pull into the parking lot to turn around and take a left back onto Leroy Street.

20. Arthur Samuel Grier House, c. 1922

421 Montrose Street / Charlotte, NC 28205

Proceed down Leroy Street. Turn left onto Sam Drenan Road and take the first right onto Skyland Avenue. At the stop sign turn left onto Dunn Avenue and take the second left onto Orange Street. Turn right onto Fannie Circle and take the next right onto Gene Avenue. Turn left onto Montrose Street and look to your left as the road curves. The Arthur Samuel Grier House is the large, two-story Craftsman-style house.

21. Martin's Grocery, c. 1938

2718 Monroe Road / Charlotte, NC 28205

Turn left at the stop sign from Montrose Street onto Monroe Road. Look immediately to your left. Martin's Grocery is now called Lupie's Café. If time permits, stop and enjoy a casual meal at Lupie's Café.

22. Rosedale, c. 1815

3427 N. Tryon Street / Charlotte, NC 28206

Proceed down Monroe Road which becomes 7th Street. Turn right onto Pecan Avenue and drive about 0.5 miles and turn right onto Commonwealth Avenue. Take a left onto The Plaza at the first stop sign. Veer right at the stop light and continue down The Plaza. Take a left onto Matheson Avenue which becomes East 30th Street. Turn right onto North Tryon Street at the light and follow the brown signs for Historic Rosedale. Turn left into the parking lot. Tours of the site are given Thursday through Sunday at 1:30pm and 3pm at a cost of \$5 for adults and \$4 for children. Please visit the Historic Rosedale website at [www.historicrosedale.org](http://www.historicrosedale.org) for upcoming events.

23. W.T. Alexander Slave Burial Ground, 1840s-1880s

9920 Brickleberry Lane / Charlotte, NC 28262

Turn left back onto N. Tryon Street. Continue for less than 1 mile and turn left onto West Sugar Creek Road. Merge onto I-85 North towards Concord. Drive approximately 4.5 miles to Mallard Creek Church Road, exit 46A. Turn right onto Mallard Creek Church Road. Proceed down the hill toward US 29. Turn right into the Thornberry Apartments and park. Walk past the gates and veer left at the first intersection. The Slave Cemetery is at the far end of the block surrounded by a black metal fence. Monday through Friday Thornberry's gates are open; however, on the weekend you might have to park near the office and walk back to the burial grounds. You will not be able to enter the burial grounds as it is on unstable land.

End Tour. To return to Charlotte take I-85 South.



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# 250 YEARS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SITES



## EARLY LIFE

First populated in the 1740s, Mecklenburg County's political and economic elite began to see potential for fortune as cotton planters. In the 1760s slavery was introduced and the agricultural economy boomed. With the expansion of the railroads in the 1850s, product distribution improved, and Charlotte became an important and successful distribution center. By 1860 slaves accounted for 40% of the population. As much as 25% of the county's white population owned slaves, but only 1% were classified as planters. The majority of slaves worked as field hands or domestics, and in some instances,

slaves worked in the area gold mines. While slaves were present in every aspect of life and greatly

contributed to Mecklenburg County's economic success, the physical structures of slaves have disappeared.



**1 Latta Plantation \***  
Year Built c. 1800  
5225 Sample Road  
Huntersville, NC 28078

At the height of prosperity, this 700 acre plantation owned 23 adults and 11 children as slaves. These slaves contributed greatly to the plantation's success and reputation for excellent cotton.



**2 Hopewell Presbyterian Church \***  
Year Built 1833  
10500 Beatties Ford Road  
Huntersville, NC 28078

While Hopewell was considered a white church, it was one of the first churches in Charlotte that allowed slaves to attend services in the balcony.

## WASHINGTON HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

Washington Heights, located about two miles northwest from the heart of the city, opened in 1913. It was a street car suburb built specifically for Charlotte's rising black middle-class, offering "country living" with a five-cent trolley fare to work downtown. Washington Heights was one of the first developments in the nation built specifically for African Americans. Wide streets lined with modest bungalows featured prominent eaved-roofs with exposed rafter tails and broad front porches. The neighborhood was named in honor of educator Booker T. Washington. West bound streets are named to commemorate prominent blacks and area residents including Thad Tate, a local barber and community leader,

Dr. D.J. Sanders, Biddle University's first black president, and

George E. Davis (Davis Street is now Dundeen Street).



**3 West Charlotte (Northwest School of the Arts)**  
Year Built 1938  
1415 Beatties Ford Road  
Charlotte, NC 28216

Built by community members, this school alleviated the overcrowding at the West Charlotte High School in 2nd Ward. Despite the lack of basic amenities like toilets, a cafeteria or gym, the school educated generations of Washington Heights' residents.



**4 Davenport House**  
Year Built c. 1920  
1223 Beatties Ford Road  
Charlotte, NC 28216

Reverend W.H. Davenport was a Civic Leader and Editor of the Star of Zion, the national newspaper of the A.M.E. Zion church. The paper was once published in Charlotte's 2nd Ward.



**5 Wilson House**  
Year Built c. 1915  
2328 Sanders Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28216

Reverend H. Wilson was one of the first lot purchasers in Washington Heights. His modest bungalow may be the oldest surviving house in the neighborhood.



**6 Excelsior Club\***  
Year Built c. 1910  
921 Beatties Ford Road  
Charlotte, NC 28216

For many years the building served as a private African American social club and in the 1960s a venue for civil rights strategy sessions. At one time it was the largest black nightclub on the East Coast.



**7 United House of Prayer**  
Established 1926  
601 Beatties Ford Road  
Charlotte, NC 28216

Charles Emanuel Grace, better known as "Sweet Daddy Grace," founded this church in 1926. It remains the "Motherhouse" of House of Prayer churches nationally.



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## BIDDLEVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD

Biddleville, established in 1871, is Charlotte's oldest surviving black neighborhood. It began as a rim village next to Biddle University (now Johnson C. Smith University). Early on, most residents commuted to the city for work and lived in small hall-and-parlor style homes with just a few rooms. Many, to add interest, attached a small gable over the front door. As the university grew, Biddleville became known as a favored residential area for the black elite, and the architecture reflected the success of its citizens. The neighborhood continued to grow as the 1960's urban renewal of the Brooklyn neighborhood forced people from the city center. As the area grew, hall-and-parlor style houses were replaced with more spacious pyramidal houses incorporating Craftsman style elements. Biddleville remains a vital part of Charlotte's African American heritage and retains its distinct character only a few miles north of the center city.



**8 Mt. Carmel Baptist Church\***  
**Year Built 1921**  
**408-416 Campus Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28216**

With the help of JCSU students and faculty, architect Louis H. Asbury built the church to offer Baptist worship services as an alternative to the thriving Presbyterian churches.



**9 George E. Davis House\***  
**Year Built c. 1890**  
**301 Campus Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28216**

Dr. Davis was the first black professor at JCSU and influenced education in Charlotte, raising funds for schools as the state agent for the Rosenwald Fund.



**10 Grand Pearl Theater\***  
**Year Built 1928**  
**333 Beatties Ford Road**  
**Charlotte, NC 28216**

Near JCSU, the theater was the entertainment center of Biddleville for 30 years. It is the only movie theater remaining in Charlotte that catered exclusively to African Americans during the Jim Crow era.



**11 Johnson C. Smith University\***  
**Established 1867**  
**100 Beatties Ford Road**  
**Charlotte, N.C. 28216**

Biddle Institute, named after Henry Biddle, a fallen Union officer, was originally founded to prepare former slaves for freedom. It is now an accredited four-year university with a number of impressive buildings such as Biddle Memorial Hall (1883), Carter Hall (1895) and the Carnegie Library (1911). It remains the heart of Biddleville.



**11a Biddle Memorial Hall\*\***  
**Year Built 1883**  
**100 Beatties Ford Road**  
**Charlotte, N.C. 28216**

This ornate Victorian Institutional style building with its elegant clock tower, various motifs and materials was an architectural triumph visible from most of the city. It was the tallest building in Charlotte upon its completion.



**12 Clinton Chapel AME Zion**  
**Established 1865**  
**1901 Rozzelles Ferry Road**  
**Charlotte, NC 28208**

The original structure, built in 1865, was located in Third Ward. It was the first church in Charlotte to serve only African Americans.



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## FIRST WARD NEIGHBORHOOD

Prior to the turn of the 19th century Charlotte's residential areas were often a mixture of black and white residents, referred to as a "salt and pepper" pattern. As the division of races became more defined the eastern section of First Ward developed into a neighborhood representing all socio-economic levels. Civic leader and businessman, Thad Tate, owned a two-story Italianate home on Seventh Street surrounded by many blue collar workers who rented shotgun houses. The area also had a collection of shopkeepers, but it was not as extensive as the business district found in Brooklyn. The importance of religion and the struggle for independence can still be seen in First Ward. Both the First United Presbyterian Church and the Little Rock A.M.E. Church served as religious and community safe havens anchoring the ends of the neighborhood. Most of Charlotte's African American neighborhoods were demolished in the 1960s and 1970s by the Charlotte Redevelopment Authority to make way for urban growth and development.



**13 Seventh Street United Presbyterian Church**  
**Year Built c. 1895**  
**406 N. College Street**  
**Charlotte, N.C. 28202**

One of the first exclusively black churches established after the Civil War; it served as a safe haven and gathering place for newly freed slaves.



**14 Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church\***  
**Year Built c. 1911**  
**403 N. Myers Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28202**

The congregation raised \$20,000 to hire architect James M. McMichael to build this glorious Neo-Classical Revival church. It has played a leading role in shaping the black community of Charlotte and now houses the Afro American Cultural Center.



**14a Shotgun Houses\***  
**Year Built c. 1890s**  
**403 N. Myers Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28202**

Formerly in a different location, these "shotgun" houses are a few remaining examples of the most common African American house type found in Charlotte during the late 19th and early 20th century.

## SECOND WARD / BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD

In the late 19th century, segregation laws strongly affected African-American community development. As a result, neighborhoods became segregated. Brooklyn, the black district of Second Ward, had the highest density of black residents and was the heart of the business district. It ran along South Brevard and East Trade Streets, offering a variety of retail and commerce, including barber shops, pressing clubs, groceries, restaurants, confectioners and tailors. In addition to the various shopkeepers, Charlotte's first black dentists, physicians, and clergymen not only ran successful businesses, but they also resided in the area. Mecklenburg Investment Company and Grace A.M.E. Zion

Church were neighborhood icons and today are the only surviving buildings of what was once a vibrant African American community.



**15 Grace A.M.E. Zion Church\***  
**Year Built 1902**  
**219 South Brevard Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28202**

Located in what once the most prestigious area in the Brooklyn Neighborhood section of Fourth Ward, Grace A.M.E. was designed and built by William W. Smith. He helped found the church and also built Mecklenburg Investment Company next door.



**16 Mecklenburg Investment Company Building\*\***  
**Year Built 1922**  
**233-237 S. Brevard Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28202**

The first structure in Charlotte to be planned and executed by African American leaders in the community to accommodate their businesses and professional offices.



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## CHERRY NEIGHBORHOOD

The Cherry neighborhood was platted in 1891 by wealthy landowners John and Mary an Myers in efforts to create a place where urban laborers could own their own homes. Typically, the earliest house type was similar to that found on tenant farms and in mill villages. Others resemble the hall-and-parlor form with subdued Queen Anne elements including a decorative front-gable and a hipped-roof front porch. Cherry neighborhood, also called Cherryton or Cherrytown, was named after the cherry trees that once grew on the hillsides near the Myers' cotton farm. While the cherry trees are gone, the neighborhood's unusual history and design as a "so called model Negro housing development"

incorporating urban amenities such as a school, churches, a city park and tree lined streets, survives to this day.



**17 Morgan School\***  
Year Built 1925  
500 South Torrence Street  
Charlotte, NC

Served as the elementary school and center for the African American community of Cherry. It was designed by architect Louis H. Asbury and stands as a reminder of legal racial segregation.



**18 Mt. Zion Lutheran Church\***  
Year Built 1896  
1605 Luther Street  
Charlotte, NC

One of the first churches established in Charlotte to train preachers and teachers; it has continuously served as a religious center for the Cherry community.

## GRIER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

The area that later became known as Grier Heights, also called The Quarter or Griertown was not planned as a suburban neighborhood. In fact, neighborhood history reveals the community was organized by former slaves. Although the exact date of establishment is unknown, Sam Billings, the first recorded black landowner, purchased a substantial amount of property in 1892-93. The oldest homes, dating from the early and mid-20th century, were built along Skyland Avenue and Orange Street. Until the 1920s, hall-and-parlor and one-story cross-gabled houses were most typical. In later years, Craftsman Style bungalows with small hipped roofs were popular. Among one of the most impressive homes was that of Arthur Samuel Grier, for whom the neighborhood was named. He was active in civic affairs and was a large landowner. Grier later founded Grier Development Company and built over 100 homes in the neighborhood.



**19 Billingsville Rosenwald School\*\***  
Year Built 1927  
3100 Leroy Street  
Charlotte, NC 28205

Grier Heights residents purchased two acres from Sam Billings, a local businessman and landowner to build the school. Billings donated an additional acre of land, and the school was named in his honor.



**20 Arthur Samuel Grier House**  
Year Built 1922  
421 Montrose Street  
Charlotte, NC 28205

This large eclectic style home with both Craftsman and Colonial Revival elements was a testament to Grier's success as a businessman. He was a civic leader and helped develop one of Charlotte's first suburban African American neighborhoods.



**21 Martin's Grocery (Lupie's Café)**  
Year Built c. 1938  
2718 Monroe Road  
Charlotte, NC

Arthur S. Grier originally owned and operated this neighborhood cornerstore. It is an example of a pre-WWII African American commercial building.



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# PLANTATION LIFE

African Americans have been an integral part of the county’s population since its establishment in 1762, as many citizens owned slaves and

several planters operated sizeable plantations. Although dwarfed by the more successful and wealthy “aristocratic” economies in South

Carolina and Virginia, North Carolina and Mecklenburg County were fully entrenched in the cotton economy of the nineteenth century.



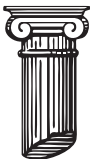
**22 Rosedale\*\***  
**Year Built c. 1815**  
**3427 N. Tryon Street**  
**Charlotte, NC 28206**

Also known as “Frew’s Folly” for its lavish homestead, it was built by Archibald Frew. Twenty slaves lived and worked on the once 911 acre plantation. Several slaves became skilled blacksmiths and produced not only all the ironwork on the property, but were hired out to build other business including the U.S. Mint in 1837.



**23 W.T. Alexander Slave Burial Ground\***  
**1840s - 1880s**  
**9920 Brickleberry Lane**  
**Charlotte, NC 28262**  
**(near W Mallard Creek Road & N Tryon Street)**  
This cemetery was originally part of the Alexander Plantation in the early 19th century. It is one of the most extensive and best preserved slave cemeteries in Mecklenburg County.

\* Mecklenburg County Historic Landmark  
\*\* National Register of Historic Places



**HISTORIC  
CHARLOTTE, INC.**