

**destruction of property by their own militiamen. Hundreds of refugees were set adrift by the armies of the Americans or British as they alternated possession of the terrain. On all sides families lost fathers, sons, or brothers who had been their sole economic support. Hundreds of thousands of acres changed ownership, and new settlers came to replace those who left.**<sup>28</sup>

#### A CAPITAL CITY IS FOUNDED

After the war, Hillsborough was the site of the state's first constitutional convention to consider ratification of the U.S. Constitution drawn up by the delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. North Carolina's convention delegates were concerned about a lack of explicit protections of citizen rights in the Constitution, and voted against its ratification. The following year ratification was reconsidered at a second constitutional convention held in Fayetteville. This time the delegates ratified the Constitution, but only after receiving assurances that Congress would quickly enact a bill of rights. Some historians believe that much of the credit for the bill of rights goes to those delegates meeting in Hillsborough in 1788.<sup>29</sup>

Another item of business at the Hillsborough constitutional convention established a process for selecting a permanent state capital. Since the end of the war the General Assembly had met in several locations, but it grew tired of moving around, and transporting state documents from place to place. Delegates to the convention were instructed to select an "unalterable seat of government of this state."<sup>30</sup> The convention established a committee to take on that task. That committee called for nominations, receiving seven for its consideration. Among them were Hillsborough, Fayetteville—an important commercial center on the Cape Fear River—and "Mr. Isaac Hunter's in Wake County."<sup>31</sup>

After considerable deliberation and politicking, a majority of the committee and the full body of delegates voted for a new capital city. It was to be built within ten miles of Isaac Hunter's plantation in Wake County, the delegates eschewing arguments that the site had no commercial future and would never "rise above the degree of a village."<sup>32</sup> The exact location of the new town was left undefined, to discourage land speculation and to allow further consideration of land characteristics. The decision for the Wake County site was undoubtedly a grave disappointment to the residents of Hillsborough, who had played such a central role in the area's history up to that time. The town "seemed headed toward obscurity."<sup>33</sup>

After much additional debate and political posturing in the General Assembly, it finally accepted the Wake County recommendation and appointed a nine-member commission to locate and purchase a tract of land suitable for a four-hundred-acre—or more—capital city. The commission visited more

than a dozen farms before accepting an invitation to dine with Colonel Joel Lane, who owned one of the sites under consideration: "Legend has it that they were so wined and dined by Colonel Joel Lane, who conducted a tavern in a portion of his home, that after several days of consideration and conviviality—enlivened by a concoction called 'cherry bounce'—they recommended the purchase of a thousand acres of his land."<sup>34</sup> Lane's land was purchased by the state in 1792, and Raleigh—named after Sir Walter Raleigh, who established the first, although unsuccessful, settlement in North Carolina—was born.

This highly political and, if legend be true, well-lubricated process of selecting a site for the state capital had several long-lasting ramifications for the development of the region, and for the city of Raleigh. First, the chosen site had none of the advantages associated with major cities in terms of its location. It was not, for example, on a navigable waterway. In fact, it was not even at a major crossroads, although a north-south road did transverse the site. The site was also peripheral to the cotton-producing and naval stores businesses to its east as well as the tobacco-producing areas to its north.<sup>35</sup> From its beginning Raleigh was thus destined to struggle to become more than the home of state government.

Second, the decision to eschew the existing towns, particularly Hillsborough and Fayetteville, meant that the region could not develop a city of combined political and commercial power that could dominate the surrounding communities. Since the turn of the 1800s Raleigh has always been one of the largest cities in this part of the Piedmont, but its lack of commercial appeal has kept it from growing large enough to dominate the area. It is simply a city in the Triangle—not *the* city. Third, having the state capital as one of the cities in the Triangle has benefited the area in many ways, which will soon become evident.

#### RALEIGH TAKES SHAPE

Anxious to have a permanent capital, as soon as the site was acquired, the General Assembly hired William Christmas to plan a four-hundred-acre capital city. A state senator with experience planning several new towns in other states, Christmas organized his plan for the city around five squares: one six-acre square for the Capitol and four four-acre squares located one diagonal block from the main square. In addition to these squares, the plan showed a rectangular grid ten blocks by eleven blocks containing a total of 276 one-acre parcels, 20 of which were designated for state use. Note the relatively large size of the building lots. From the earliest days, large lots and low densities were the prevailing patterns of land development in Triangle communities.

Upon the completion of this plan, the legislature authorized the auction of

lots to raise funds to construct the Capitol, hiring Massachusetts architect Rhoddam Atkins to design and oversee its construction. The building, with offices for state officials and meeting rooms for the General Assembly, was begun in late 1792 and completed in 1796. This much-reviled “misshapened pile”<sup>36</sup> was extensively renovated in 1819, before being destroyed by fire in 1831. With the statehouse opening, inns and other commercial enterprises gravitated to the area, particularly along Fayetteville Street, which headed south from the Capitol. In 1795, the General Assembly established a Raleigh city government to repair the streets, maintain order, and provide other essential services to the fledgling city.

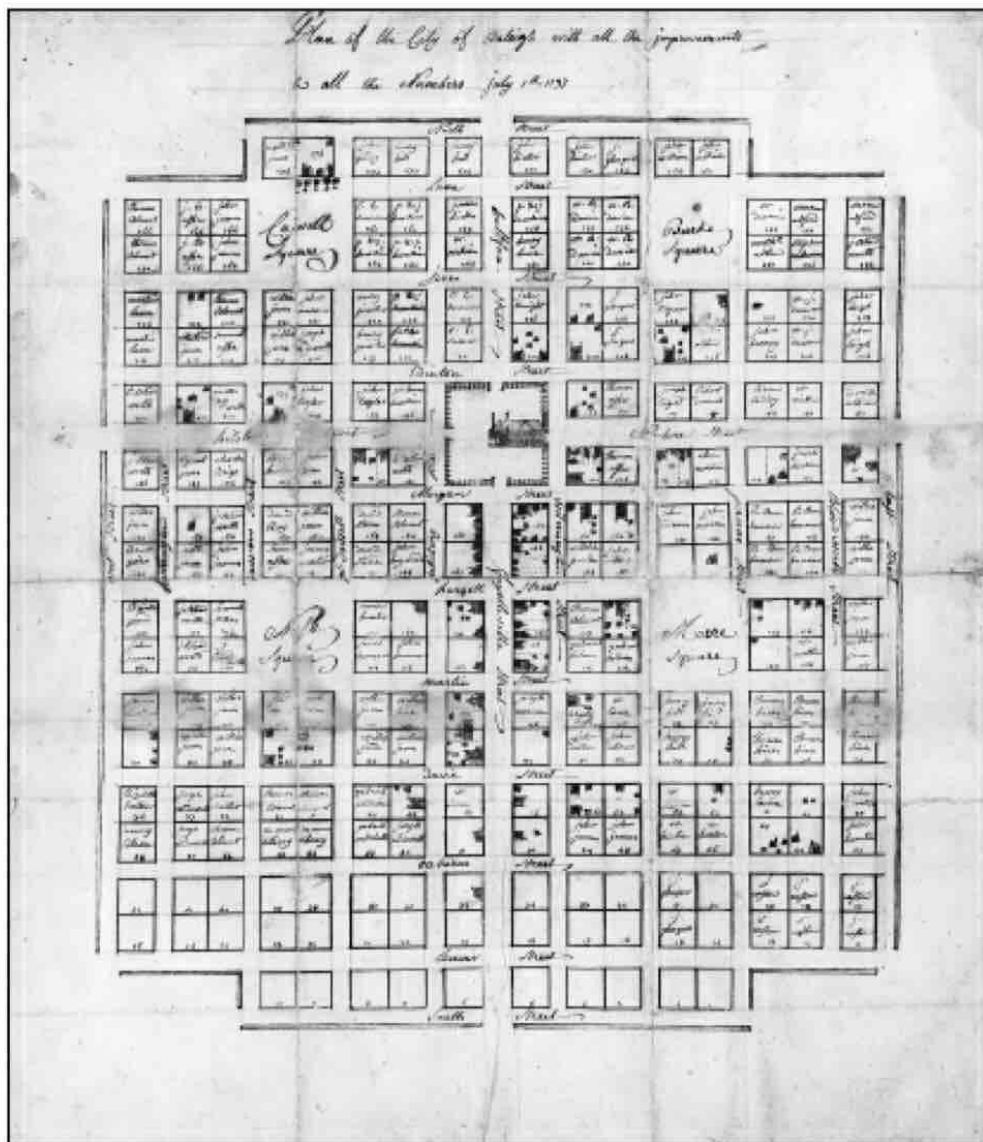


Figure 5. Plan of Raleigh developed by William Christmas. Two of the four public squares shown on this map have been usurped by the state government: one for the governor's mansion, the other for state office buildings (courtesy of the N.C. State Archives).

## A UNIVERSITY IS FOUNDED ON NEW HOPE CHAPEL HILL

On a cold, drizzling day in January 1795, a delegation of dignitaries, headed by Governor Richard Dobbs, set out from Raleigh to hold opening ceremonies for the first state university in the nation. The delegation “braved the discomforts of twenty-eight miles of red mud and pipe clay and aged rocks stretching from Chapel Hill to Raleigh (the new state capital).”<sup>37</sup> What they saw when they arrived was “a two-storied brick building [Old East], the unpainted wooden house of the Presiding Professor, the avenue between them filled with stumps of recently felled trees, a pile of yellowish red clay, dug out for the foundation of the Chapel, or Person Hall, a pile of lumber collected for building Steward's Hall, a Scotch-Irish preacher-professor in whose mind were fermenting ideas of infidelity, destined soon to cost him his place, and not one student.”<sup>38</sup>

Despite this state of affairs, the delegation reported to the board of trustees that “youth disposed to enter the University may come forward with assurance of being received.”<sup>39</sup> The first student, Hinton James who walked from his home in faraway New Hanover County, did not arrive for another two weeks after the official opening.

Initial support for creating a state university came from strange bedfellows: the Scots-Irish population in the state's Piedmont area and the landed gentry of mostly English descent in the state's Coastal Plain. The Scots-Irish were predominantly Presbyterians, who believed in the importance of education for their ministers and clergy, while the eastern gentry wanted options other than faraway places like London or Boston for their sons' educations.

Support for a state-chartered university coalesced within the eighteen-person committee charged with drafting North Carolina's first constitution in 1776. Drawing heavily on a similar act included in the recently passed state constitution of Pennsylvania, Article 41 of the North Carolina constitution stated: “That a School or Schools shall be established by the Legislature, for the convenient Instruction of Youth, with such Salaries to the Masters, paid by the Public, as may enable them to instruct at low Prices: and all useful Learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more Universities.”<sup>40</sup>

Article 41 authorized state-supported schools, but eight years were to pass before the General Assembly would take up a bill to actually create a state-sponsored university.

Although many individuals worked to create the University of North Carolina, the title of “Father of the University” goes to William Richardson Davie, who played a leading role in introducing and lobbying for a General Assembly bill in 1789 to create it. Davie, who was “dynamic in appearance and personality and eloquent in speech,” had developed a solid reputation among the

state's leaders based on his Revolutionary War service. He'd been General Nathanael Greene's chief of cavalry in his battle with Cornwallis, and a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.<sup>41</sup> Passing the bill to create a university was not easy. It became a lightning rod for the General Assembly's anti-Federalist factions, who feared the university would become "an—engine of political propaganda and as a bulwark of aristocratic privilege."<sup>42</sup>

Yet on December 11, 1789 a bill creating a university was approved by the General Assembly. Important to the subsequent choice of the New Hope Chapel Hill site was a provision in the bill that stipulated that the university could not be within five miles of a seat of government or any place holding court. This stipulation, which was likely included to avoid disruptions due to rowdy students, ruled out many of the state's major cities.<sup>43</sup>

A follow-up bill passed eleven days later provided funding for the university from the sale of escheats—unclaimed land grants that revert to the state—and from arrearages due the state. The problem was that this funding mechanism provided no immediate funds to create the university. So Davie and members of the forty-member Board of Trustees sought donations from private individuals, while working to secure a \$10,000 loan from the state. After another hard-fought battle, this loan was approved in December 1791. Later, the state converted this loan into a grant. Other than the escheats and arrearages this was the only state appropriation provided for university support until after the Civil War.<sup>44</sup>

With the \$10,000 loan and \$6,723 in private donations in hand, the Board of Trustees turned its attention to selecting a site for the university. In August 1792 the board settled on a site-selection process involving the nomination of several towns, and the placement of the university within fifteen miles of the town receiving the most votes. Hillsborough and Raleigh were among the nominees but so was Cipritz Bridge, located on New Hope Creek in Chatham County. Voting occurred, and Cipritz Bridge was selected, due to its central location within the state and its proximity to a major crossroads.<sup>45</sup> Again, Hillsborough missed out on securing a prize that would have radically changed its destiny and another one hundred years would pass before Raleigh would get its own state university.

A committee of eight trustees was then given responsibility for recommending a specific site within fifteen miles of Cipritz Bridge. On November 5, 1792, that committee visited New Hope Chapel Hill, in southern Orange County. New Hope Chapel Hill was named after a small log chapel, built on this high ground in colonial times. Committee members were smitten by the beauty of the site, by "its impressive eminence above the surrounding countryside, the beauty of its woodlands and the abundance of creeks and springs" in the area.<sup>46</sup> In its favor, this site also was close to a major crossroads and to

the town of Hillsborough, and, possibly most important of all, a group of eight local land owners were willing to donate 1,290 acres of land plus approximately \$1,600 in cash if the state constructed the university on New Hope Chapel Hill. James Hogg and Alexander Mebane, two members of the site-selection committee who lived in Orange County, organized these donations. The committee unanimously recommended this site to the full Board of Trustees, which approved it on December 5, 1792.

A scant three days after the New Hope Chapel Hill site was selected, the board created another committee to oversee the university's planning, the construction of one or more buildings to accommodate fifty students, and laying out a town to support the university. This committee was also charged with overseeing the sale of lots in the new town at public auction. In August 1793 the committee convened on New Hope Chapel Hill and planned both the campus and the surrounding town. This rather crude plan outlined a campus roughly square in shape, with two major boulevards, never constructed, approaching the campus from the north and the east. Close to the center of the campus, sites for the first several buildings were identified. The plan also showed a total of twenty-four two-acre and four-acre building lots arranged two or three deep around the northern and western edges of the campus. Again note the relatively large size of these building lots. The main street bordering the campus's northern edge, now called Franklin Street, had south-side lots backing up onto the campus. Over time the university acquired many of those lots so that its northern quad, known as McCorkle Place, now borders the south side of Franklin Street.

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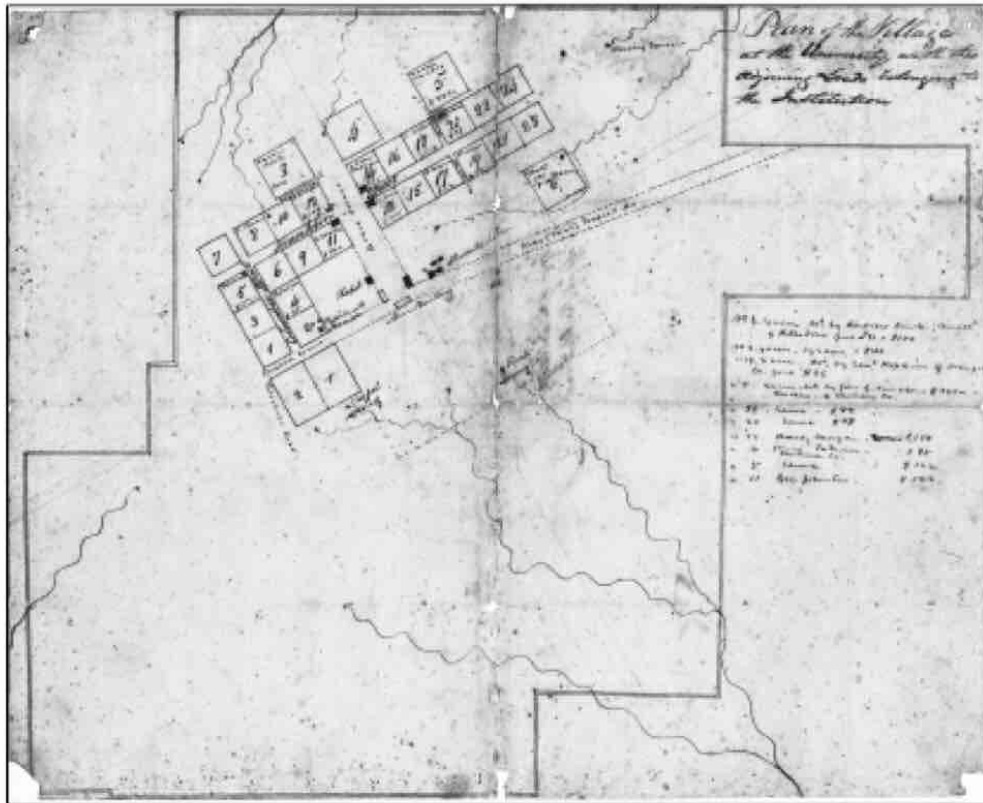


Figure 6. University of North Carolina and Chapel Hill circa 1817. Many of the lots adjacent to the campus on the south side of Franklin Street have subsequently been bought by the university and incorporated into the campus. Most of the remaining thousand-acre campus has now been developed (courtesy of the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Chapel at Chapel Hill libraries).

Almost immediately, the construction of the first university building got under way. The building, now called Old East, was originally designed as part of a larger three-building complex and was patterned after dormitories at Yale.<sup>47</sup> It was a two-story 3,380-square-foot brick building, designed to serve as both a dormitory and classroom building. On October 12, 1793, a group of dignitaries met on the campus to lay the cornerstone for this building. William Richardson Davie, who had played such a central role in marshalling support for the creation of the university, presided over the ceremonies.

Upon completing the cornerstone-laying ceremonies, some of those present adjourned to witness or participate in an auction of the village lots. Many of the very people who had donated the land to create the university bought these lots at the auction.<sup>48</sup> Over the ensuing decades, buildings constructed on those lots were almost entirely in support of the university's faculty and students, including blacksmith shops, inns, and the homes of univer-

sity professors. The town of Chapel Hill was the quintessential college town: it did not exist prior to the university, and it was created for the sole purpose of supporting the university. Over the decades, the town's fortunes have thus risen or fallen with the university's.

#### THE TRIANGLE AREA IN THE EARLY 1800S

The early 1800s were tough economic times for the state and the region. As farmland became less fertile, many North Carolina residents moved farther west. Between 1815 and 1850 a full one-third of North Carolina's residents, including many from the Piedmont, moved out of the state.<sup>49</sup> State officials were also reluctant to invest in public infrastructure. David R. Goldfield notes that "while other states expanded boundaries, built roads and canals and made other internal improvements, as well as boosted their educational systems, North Carolina stood still."<sup>50</sup> The state developed a reputation as the "Rip Van Winkle state," which began to change only in the 1840s and 1850s, when state government began investing in railroads, to connect farmers and small manufacturers to larger markets beyond state borders.

During this period Raleigh, as the state's capital city, grew more rapidly than Hillsborough and Chapel Hill. In 1810 the General Assembly passed legislation creating the State Bank of North Carolina, stipulating that it be located in Raleigh. The business of the legislature and executive agencies also created demand for services such as those of lawyers and hostelrys. A major threat to Raleigh's very existence came in 1831 when the State House burned to the ground. Community leaders in Fayetteville, still aggrieved at being passed over the first time, saw an opportunity to have the capital moved there. Raleigh's community leaders, however, were able to fend them off. The 1856 opening of the North Carolina Railroad provided another boost to Raleigh's economy, but it still lagged well behind other North Carolina cities.

The towns of Hillsborough and Chapel Hill grew very slowly during this period. Hillsborough's fortunes were further undermined by the continual shrinkage of Orange County. By 1800 Orange County was less than half its original geographic size, as several new counties were created to provide more convenient access to services. Several small cotton mills were built on the rivers and streams in the town's vicinity, but its claim to fame then was the establishment of several preparatory schools, including the Nash Kollock School for women and the Hillsborough Military Academy for boys. Hillsborough developed a reputation as a cultured place, such that "early recruits for the faculty of the University of North Carolina who complained about Chapel Hill's lack of social amenities were advised to travel to Hillsborough."<sup>51</sup>

Chapel Hill's fortunes were directly tied to those of the University of North Carolina, which struggled mightily during this period. The university suffered from political backlash and a chronic lack of funding. In 1800, a scant five

years after the auspicious opening ceremony, the Federalists who championed the university's creation lost power to the Democratic Republicans, who promptly cut all state support. Even as that funding was partially restored over the next decade, President Joseph Caldwell struggled to keep the university open. By 1835, when Caldwell died in office, there were still a modest eighty-nine students, five faculty members, and four completed buildings. The town also grew very slowly during this time. In 1818, Chapel Hill had thirteen homes, two hotels, four stores, and a blacksmith shop.<sup>52</sup> The university and town fortunes improved greatly in the 1840s and 1850s as Whig Party reforms were favorable to both. By 1851 Chapel Hill had grown large enough to be considered a "town" under state statutes, and by 1860 the university's enrollment had increased to 425 students.

#### ENTREPRENEURIAL DURHAM

While the towns of Hillsborough, Raleigh, and Chapel Hill were largely founded by governmental actions, Durham was the result of raw entrepreneurship. Its early reputation was one of a bawdy, rough-and-tumble place, where all varieties of "diversions" could be found. In spite of numerous efforts to change it, that reputation has, to some extent, persisted to the present day.

The city of Durham developed on a ridge between the Eno River and New Hope Creek northeast of Chapel Hill and west of Raleigh. The area's original settlements were close to the intersection of two roads, "mere cart tracks winding through boundless forests that alternated with scattered homesteads and fields."<sup>53</sup> The east-west road connected Hillsborough to Raleigh, while the north-south road connected Roxboro to Fayetteville. In the early 1800s, Dilliardsville, a small collection of buildings and a general store on the east side of what is now downtown Durham, was awarded the first post office in the area. By 1827, however, this community was in decline, and the post office was moved first to nearby Herndon's store and, in 1836, to Prattsburg which already had a general store, a cotton gin, and a blacksmith shop.<sup>54</sup> Prattsburg also had a reputation for tolerating those who disturbed the "peace and dignity of the state [by] drinking, tippling, playing at cards and other unlawful games, cursing, screaming, quarreling and otherwise misbehaving themselves."<sup>55</sup>

Another settlement on the west side of what is now downtown Durham did its part to contribute to Durham's reputation as "a roaring old place." Pin Hook, developed along the Raleigh-Hillsborough Road, was a place frequented by teamsters who would "refresh themselves from the well and a strategically located grog shop."<sup>56</sup> It, too, became known as a place of drinking, gambling, brawling, and prostitution. Among others, students from the University of North Carolina "would repair to Pin Hook, seeking release from the pressure of their studies where they were safely out of sight of the University of North

Carolina's faculty."<sup>57</sup>

The coming of the North Carolina Railroad would substantially change the fortunes of Prattsburg and Pin Hook. The idea of a railroad through the central part of the state had been discussed since 1828 as less expensive transport for farmers sending surplus crops to national and international markets. But not until 1849 did the state legislature pass a bill establishing the North Carolina Railroad to run from Goldsboro, where it would connect to the north-south Wilmington and Weldon line, to Raleigh and then through Hillsborough and end in Charlotte.<sup>58</sup> Surveyors located the railroad line near the Raleigh-to-Hillsborough road, and sought to acquire property for a station between Morrisville and Hillsborough in the vicinity of Prattsburg.

Several years prior to passage of the railroad bill, Dr. Bartlett Durham, who was born in 1824 on a farm west of Chapel Hill, bought a hundred acres of land between Prattsburg and Pin Hook.<sup>59</sup> In seeking land for a station between Hillsborough and Morrisville, railroad agents first approached William Pratt, owner of Prattsburg. But his asking price being too high, the agents pursued negotiations with Dr. Durham, who saw the potential of a station on his property. Durham donated four acres for the purpose and the station became known as Durham's Station.

In keeping with the area's tradition, Dr. Durham did not fit the stereotype of a quiet country doctor. He was said to be "a jovial fellow" who "on moonshiny nights would get a group of boys together and serenade the town." He was also an entrepreneur. By the time the railroad was completed in 1856, he had built a general store close to the station at the present corner of Main and Mangum Streets. In 1853 the local post office was moved to Durham's store.<sup>60</sup> Dr. Durham also became the railroad's station agent, all the while continuing to practice medicine out of a back room. Dr. Durham was elected to represent Orange County in the General Assembly. While selling spirits in his store, and having a reputation as a drinker, he nonetheless introduced a bill to incorporate a "Sons of Temperance" chapter in Durham.<sup>61</sup>

#### BULL DURHAM: THE RISE OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

The improbable story of Durham becoming the center of the tobacco industry in the late 1800s begins on a rainy summer night in 1839. An eighteen-year-old slave, known only as Stephen, fell asleep while tending a tobacco-curing fire on a plantation in Caswell County.<sup>62</sup> Awaking in the middle of the night to find the fire almost out he stoked it with charcoal rather than wood. The charcoal fire burned hotter and began turning the tobacco leaves a bright yellow rather than the typical brown.<sup>63</sup> The novelty and superior taste of bright leaf tobacco was to play an important role in Durham becoming the country's tobacco capital. But it would take another serendipitous event in 1865 to introduce bright leaf to the world.

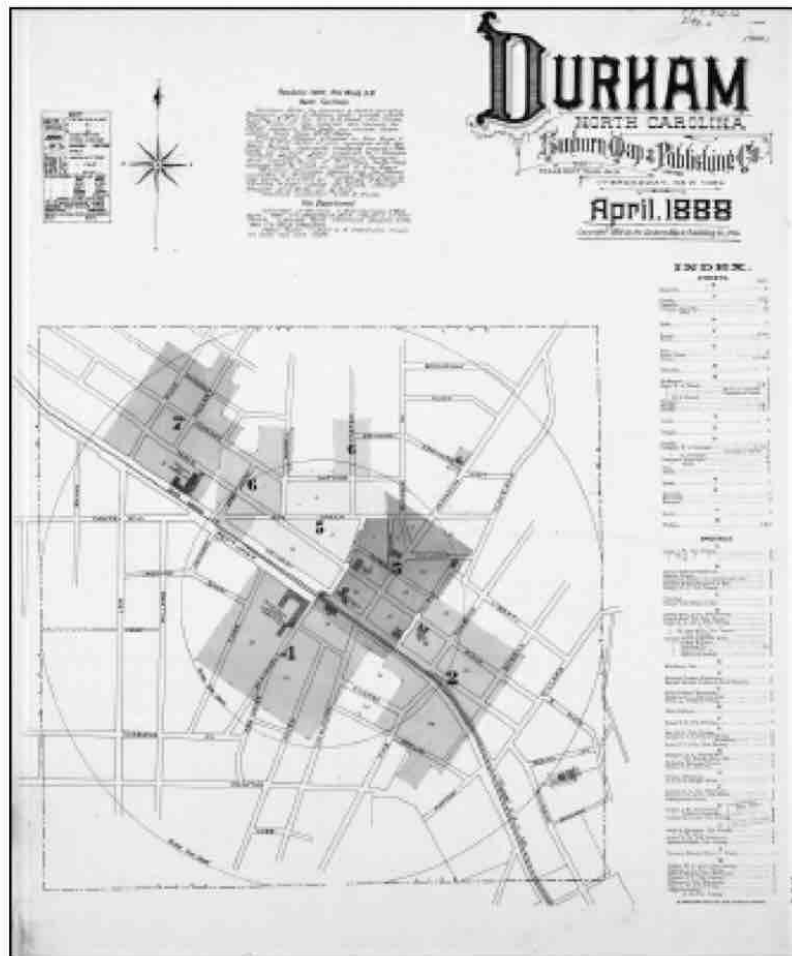


Figure 7. Map of Durham in 1888 developed by the Sanborn Map Company. The chaotic street pattern was a result of the lack of a plan to guide development. The shaded and numbered areas reference more detailed maps showing the individual land parcels and building footprints (courtesy of the N.C. State Archives).

Several energetic and creative entrepreneurs provided the other major ingredient for Durham's early tobacco success. While tobacco had long been grown on many farms in central North Carolina, growers began to realize that the real money was in producing shredded leaf ready to chew or smoke. So small factories began sprouting up on tobacco farms and in small towns close to rail stations, such as Durham's Station. Robert and Thomas Morris and Wesley Wright opened their factory there in 1858, selling it in 1861 to John Ruffin Green, the son of a local tobacco farmer.<sup>64</sup> Green greatly expanded the business by targeting "the sophisticated smokers at the university in Chapel Hill for whom Durham's Station was the closest connection to the outside world. His product positioning worked, and thus the good word on Durham tobacco began going places."<sup>65</sup> It was Green who conceived and trademarked the portrait of a bull, which would travel around the world in one of the most cele-

brated mass marketing campaigns in business history.

The Civil War temporarily slowed development of Durham's tobacco industry. Although few major battles were fought on North Carolina soil, the state provided more than its share of men and supplies to the war effort, and shared mightily in the resulting deprivations and hardships.<sup>66</sup> Durham's Station did, however, play an important role in the closing days of the war. After his famous "march to the sea," the Union general William T. Sherman worked his way back north. On March 19, 1865, the Confederate general Joseph Johnston and his army of thirty-two thousand men confronted Sherman's troops in Bentonville, about forty miles east of Raleigh. Although Johnston achieved initial success, three days of fighting Sherman's superior numbers forced him to retreat west where he set up a temporary headquarters in a farmhouse outside Hillsborough. In hot pursuit, Sherman and his troops occupied Raleigh on April 13.<sup>67</sup>

Four days earlier, General Robert E. Lee had surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Courthouse. Realizing that the outcome of the war was now inevitable, and not wanting to prolong the misery, General Johnston sent a letter to Sherman asking for a conference to discuss terms of surrender. On April 17 Sherman and his delegation took a train from Raleigh to Durham's Station, where they set off on horseback to meet Johnston and his delegation on their way from Hillsborough. The two delegations met three and one-half miles west of Durham's Station and commandeered the Bennett family's farmhouse to conduct their negotiations. After nine days, with time out for checking with superiors, General Johnston surrendered the last major army of the Confederacy.<sup>68</sup>

These events set the stage for the second serendipitous event that helped catapult Durham to the forefront of the tobacco industry. While peace was being negotiated in the Bennetts' farmhouse, soldiers on both sides began helping themselves to the bright leaf tobacco stored in Durham's factories and warehouses, including those of John Ruffin Green. J. Bradley Anderson relates that "Green counted himself a ruined man [but] the theft proved an advertising scheme on a scale beyond his wildest dreams." The soldiers took to the taste of bright leaf tobacco and when they returned to their home communities they sent to Durham for more bright leaf tobacco, "spreading its reputation far and wide."<sup>69</sup>

Green's business grew in leaps and bounds. To help finance and manage that growth, in 1867 Green took on a new partner—William T. Blackwell—who had grown up on a tobacco farm in Person County and had become successful selling Green's product in eastern North Carolina. Two years after Blackwell joined the company Green died, and Blackwell bought his share of the business, along with the Bull Durham trademark. Wanting to expand the company further, Blackwell brought in new partners: James R. Day, then in

1870, Julian Shakespeare Carr—the twenty-six-year-old son of a successful Chapel Hill merchant. The young Carr, as it turned out, had a knack for advertising.

Under the direction of Blackwell, Day, and Carr, the Blackwell Company experienced phenomenal growth. In 1869 the Blackwell Company employed a work force of twelve men who produced sixty thousand pounds of tobacco products. In 1871 the company branched out into auction buying and warehousing, and in 1874 the company built a new factory that when expanded in 1880 became the largest tobacco factory in the world. By 1883 the company had a workforce of nine hundred and produced over five million pounds of smoking tobacco.

Key to this rapid growth was the multifaceted advertising campaign developed by Julian Carr. In a letter to Blackwell, Carr wrote: “It ain't no use to tell me that advertising don't pay. I have studied advertising hard, and am satisfied about it.”<sup>70</sup> Carr began by collecting celebrity endorsements, from Alfred Lord Tennyson among many others. He placed newspaper advertisements across the country and offered premiums such as razors or soap with purchases, and cash for the return of empty Bull Durham bags. Finally, he hired several sign-painting crews to travel the country to pay farmers to let them paint billboards on their roadside barns. The bull, and the tobacco it advertised, became a national icon in the late 1800s.<sup>71</sup>

#### THE DUKES OF DURHAM

The W. T. Blackwell Company, however, had plenty of competition—the most formidable being W. Duke, Sons and Company. Before the Civil War, two-time widower Washington Duke lived on a farm three miles from Durham's Station with his four children, Brody, Mary, Ben, and James. After fighting in the war and spending time in a prisoner-of-war camp, Washington returned home and opened a small tobacco factory on his farm. Soon after, Brody, his oldest son, tried to convince his father to move the operation into Durham. Having no success, Brody moved on his own, opening a small tobacco factory in an old house in the center of town where, in keeping with the town's history, he proceeded to develop a reputation both as a good businessman and a wild character. In 1874 his father finally saw the light, sold his farm, and moved his family and business into town. Brody maintained his separate business until 1879 when he joined W. Duke, Sons and Company.<sup>72</sup>



Figure 8. Julian S. Carr's national advertising campaign for Bull Durham Tobacco in the 1870s and 1880s. Teams of sign painters covered the country and paid locals for the rights to put up billboards and to paint the sides of barns (courtesy of the N.C. State Archives).

But it was James, Washington's youngest son, who is credited with the ambition and vision that created one of the largest monopolies in American history. In the 1870s the prerolled cigarette, first introduced in Europe, began to catch on in America. Before this innovation, tobacco was sold in plugs for chewing or in pouches for pipe smoking. To meet this new demand, tobacco companies including the Blackwell Company and W. Duke, Sons and Company began hiring hand rollers. The best of these could role approximately 2,000 cigarettes in a ten-hour day. It was James who convinced his partners to take a chance on a new rolling machine being perfected by James A. Bonsack of Virginia. Each Bonsack machine could produce 120,000 cigarettes in a day, the equivalent of forty skilled hand rollers. But W. Duke, Sons and Company not only bought Bonsack machines, they bought the rights to the machine, giving them a significant advantage over the competition. Profits came rolling in.

Then in 1884 James Duke moved to New York City to oversee the development of a new cigarette production plant, and once there, began organizing the American Tobacco Company. Incorporated in 1890 with James Duke as its president, American Tobacco was a holding company that owned many of the major cigarette manufacturers in the country. Over the next decade American Tobacco continued to acquire other manufacturers including R. J. Reynolds of Winston-Salem and the W. T. Blackwell Company. Then in 1904 James Duke reorganized the company into one large firm. By 1906, not counting cigars, the American Tobacco Company controlled 80 percent of the tobacco industry

in the country. Its monopoly lasted until 1911, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the company had to be broken up to restore competition to the industry. This led James Duke to retire from the company and to pursue other endeavors, such as starting an electricity generation business and helping create Duke University.

The rapid growth in Durham's tobacco industry precipitated a similar rise in population and a number of new businesses. At the end of the Civil War, Durham's Station had approximately 150 residents. By 1870 the population had grown to 256, by 1880 it reached 2,041, and by 1890 it topped 5,000. The new businesses that opened included "brokers, sign painters, itinerant entertainers, saloons, retailers, an insurance agency and notably the town's first bank."<sup>73</sup>



Figure 9. Tobacco factories in downtown Durham. Most of these factories have been converted to residential, retail, or office use (courtesy of Duke University Libraries).

In addition, the tobacco industry's need for cloth for tobacco pouches spurred the development of the cotton industry in the city. In 1884 Julian Carr formed the Durham Manufacturing Company to supply cloth to both his and others' firms in the city. Carr proceeded to build "one of the most extensive and finest plants in the country" in east Durham.<sup>74</sup> Once in operation the plant branched out into producing several other types of cloth. Members of the Duke family also jumped into the textile business. Brody Duke first purchased one struggling mill and built another in north Durham. Benjamin Duke followed suit and built a mill in west Durham. To provide housing for their employees, they constructed mill villages surrounding each plant. Over the next several decades, textile mills were to play an increasingly important role in Durham's economy.

During the boom years of the late 1800s, the city of Durham struggled to keep up with the infrastructure needed to support its burgeoning population.

Descriptions of the city during this time are unflattering to say the least: "In rainy weather, mud rose over pedestrians' ankles, seasoned with the leavings of horses and mules. Flies frolicked and bred in and about the deposits of outdoor privies and the pigpens decorating residential yards. The town's first attempt at a sanitation commission failed for lack of interest. Neighboring towns referred to typhoid as 'Durham Fever.'"<sup>75</sup>

Durham's social geography also was established during this period. The wealthy settled on the high ground along major roads, while the poor, including a significant number of blacks, were relegated to the lower ground, often along streams and in gullies. This resulted in a relatively fine-grained pattern of neighborhoods with different socioeconomic and racial characteristics. These abrupt transitions among the city's neighborhoods exist to the present day.

#### BLACK ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN DURHAM

The entrepreneurial spirit that pervaded Durham during the late 1800s influenced the city's black population. After the Civil War many freed blacks moved off plantations and farms looking for opportunities in towns such as Durham. By 1870 blacks made up a substantial proportion of the city's population. One was John Merrick, who began his career in Durham as a barber, then branched out into construction, real estate, and insurance. In 1899 he and several partners founded the North Carolina Mutual and Provident Association—now the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company—the first black-owned insurance company in the state. More than a simple business, the association became "a catalyst for minority social and economic development through jobs, investments, loans, contributions and support of social programs."<sup>76</sup> Due to its rapid success, by the early 1900s the company moved to its own building on Parrish Street in the heart of the Durham business district. Another important black entrepreneur was Richard Fitzgerald, who with his brother started a brick-making business. Richard diversified his investments and played a key role in founding the Mechanics and Farmers Bank, which specialized in loans to black small farmers and businessmen.

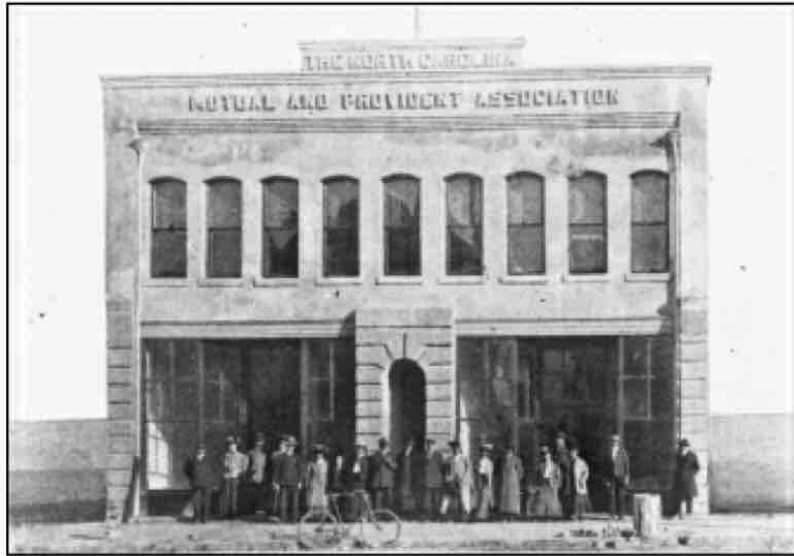


Figure 10. Staff and building of the North Carolina Mutual and Provident Association (later the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company) circa 1905. The association would grow into the largest African American life insurance company in the country (courtesy of the N.C. State Archives).

Yet another important black entrepreneur was James Shepard—son of a local pastor and graduate of Shaw University—who cofounded the Bull City Drug Company and invested in several other successful businesses. Shepard, however, “was called” to do missionary work and this led him to start a school in Durham to educate other black missionaries. In 1908 Shepard spearheaded a successful fund-raising effort, which raised \$25,000 in donations and a gift of twenty acres of land from Brody Duke, and he opened the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua in 1910 on Fayetteville Street. Thirteen years later the General Assembly appropriated funds to support the school, and renamed it the North Carolina College for Negroes, making it the first state-supported liberal arts college for blacks in the country. The General Assembly authorized several graduate programs at the college in 1939, including a law school and a school of library science. Then in 1969 the General Assembly changed the college's name to North Carolina Central University and it joined the expanded University of North Carolina system in 1972. Today North Carolina Central University has an enrollment of over six thousand students on its hundred-acre campus in southeast Durham.

#### TRINITY COLLEGE AND DUKE UNIVERSITY

In spite of its commercial success, the surrounding towns still considered Durham a dirty, uncivilized, and sordid place. Kenneth Boyd observed: “Historic, aristocratic Hillsborough regarded it as distinctly second class. Classic Chapel Hill viewed it with disdain. Cultured but politic Raleigh lifted an eye-

brow when it was mentioned.”<sup>77</sup> Several of Durham's business tycoons set out to change that image by seeking to lure a college to the city.

In 1889 Baptist leaders in the state decided to create a Baptist Female Seminary, calling for proposals from cities interested in hosting such a school. Although Durham offered twice the financial support of other offers, it was turned down, the Baptist leaders “regarding the rough and rum-soaked mill town as no place they would send their daughters.”<sup>78</sup> The more refined and respectable Raleigh was selected for the Baptist Female Seminary, which in 1909 became Meredith College. Currently Meredith College occupies a 225-acre campus in west Raleigh and has approximately twenty-one hundred students.

Two years later the leaders of Trinity College, a small, Methodist-affiliated, liberal arts school in rural Randolph County, announced their intention to move to a more urban setting. Durham's civic leaders were determined not to lose out again—they quickly made it known that they would trump any offer made by Raleigh. Washington Duke offered an \$85,000 endowment and Julian Carr offered a sixty-two-acre site on the west side of downtown Durham.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Trinity College moved to Durham.

In spite of the generous support from Duke and Carr, the early years of Durham's Trinity College were rough going. First, the main building being constructed on the new campus collapsed a day before its completion, delaying the move to Durham for another year. The need to build an entirely new campus also led to financial shortfalls that required additional gifts from Washington and Benjamin Duke, Julian Carr, and others. Washington Duke, in fact, offered the college an additional \$100,000 if it would admit women. The trustees agreed and Trinity College became a leader in woman's education in the South. During this time the college established its progressive nature by supporting faculty members who took controversial positions on the issue of race. Professor John Spencer Bassett, for example, wrote in an article published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, which he founded: “Booker T. Washington was the second greatest man born in the South in the last 100 years.”<sup>80</sup> (He granted that Robert E. Lee was the greatest.) Local newspapers called for his ouster but the board of trustees supported Bassett's right to free speech. In addition, when Booker T. Washington came to Durham to speak at the Colored County Fair in 1896, the college invited him to speak on campus. The college weathered these early storms and by the early 1900s it was a respected college on firm financial footing. Yet the ambitions of the college leadership were much bigger.

William P. Few, who assumed the college presidency in 1910, realized that there were no research-oriented universities in the South and set out to create one. He also realized that James B. Duke, who had added to his fortune in the electrical power business, was aging and potentially interested in establishing

orted Bassett's right to free speech. In addition, when Booker T. Washington came to Durham to speak at the Colored County Fair in 1896, the college invited him to speak on campus. The college weathered these early storms and by the early 1900s it was a respected college on firm financial footing. Yet the ambitions of the college leadership were much bigger.

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Duke acted in 1924, establishing the Duke Endowment and capitalizing it with \$40 million. Thirty-two percent of the endowment's yearly income was to go to support Duke University while the remaining income would go to a variety of educational, medical, and religious organizations in North and South Carolina. The following year Trinity College was renamed Duke University.

The initial plan for the expansion of Duke University included the construction of eleven new buildings on the original campus, which was to become the women's college, and sixteen new buildings on what was initially conceived as an expansion of the original campus. Speculators, anticipating such an expansion, bought up land around the campus hoping to make a killing. Duke foiled their plans, however, by commissioning a local real estate agent to quietly buy a thousand-acre farm 1.2 miles from the original campus and, while he was at it, Duke had that agent purchase another seven thousand acres of land in Durham and Orange Counties. Bought for investment purposes, this additional land is now part of Duke Forest, and although it is used primarily by Duke University's School of Forestry, it doubles as passive recreation space for area residents.

James B. Duke took a personal interest in the design and construction of the new campus. His desire was to create a university to rival the best in the country and he wanted it to look that way. To achieve that end, he selected the Philadelphia-based Horace Trumbauer's architecture firm to design the buildings, and the Olmsted brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, to develop the landscape plans for both the new campus and the original one. Until he died in October 1925, Duke "spent not only much money but much personal time on the original plans, worrying about everything from architectural detail and landscaping, to whether there should be 'less of the yellow and gold colors in the stone mix.'"<sup>82</sup>

Horace Trumbauer's principal designer for the campus was the gifted Julian F. Abele, the first African American graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture and a former student at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Abele worked closely with James B. Duke while he was alive. The great irony here is that as an African American, had he applied, he would not have been admitted to the university due to his race.<sup>83</sup>

Different architectural styles were chosen for the two campuses. For the original east campus that became the women's college, the Georgian style was selected. The new buildings included everything needed for self-sufficiency: classrooms, dormitories, a library, auditorium, and other facilities, all organized around a long rectangular north-south mall. For Duke's new west campus, the Gothic style of Princeton and the University of Chicago was selected. The new west campus was laid out in the shape of a cross with the chapel as the head of the cross, the residential buildings as one crossbeam, and classroom buildings as the other. These ornamented, stone buildings have common walls creating a continuous facade and well-defined malls. The bottom section of the cross is a landscaped entrance road leading up the hill to a 275-foot-long chapel at the top of the ridge. The chapel's 210-foot tower dominates the entrance view and dwarfs the surrounding buildings in accordance with the wishes of James B. Duke.

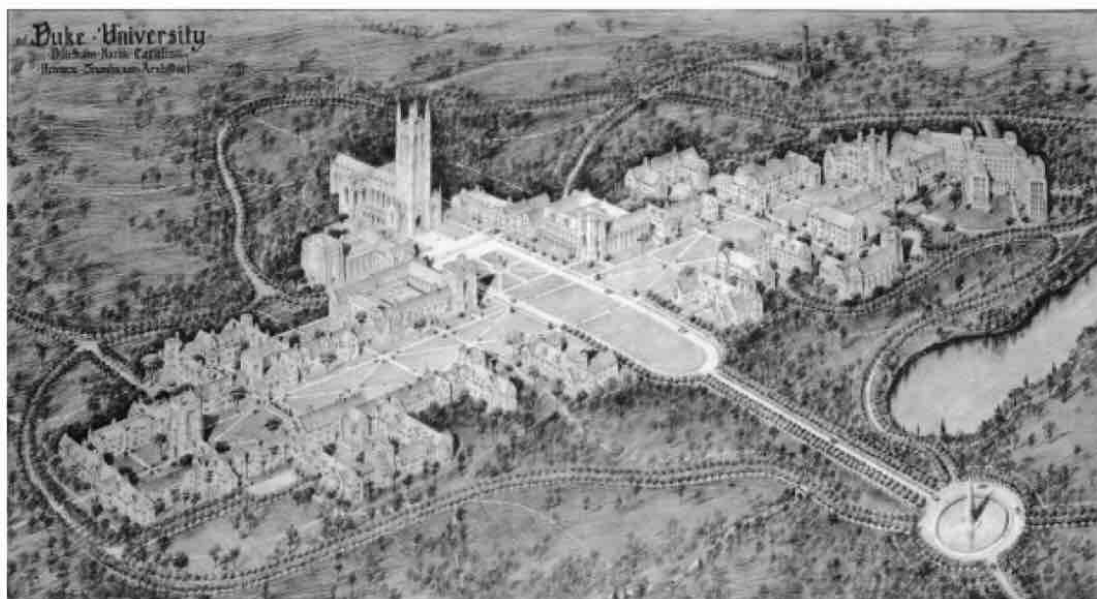


Figure 11. Rendering of Duke University's West Campus by the architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer. The African American architect Julian Abele worked closely with James B. Duke in designing the Gothic-styled campus (courtesy of Duke University Libraries).

The new campus opened in 1930, although many of the buildings were still under construction. The Duke Medical School also opened that year with Wilber Davison, formerly an assistant dean at Johns Hopkins Medical School,

as its first dean. At the time it was the only four-year medical program in North Carolina.<sup>84</sup> Davison is credited with charting a course that led to Duke's medical school becoming one of the very best in the nation.

During the Great Depression the city of Durham fared better than most, as the city's tobacco industry continued to expand. In the 1930s both the American Tobacco Company and Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company expanded their production facilities, building no less than eighteen new tobacco warehouses. Tobacco auction facilities were also expanded, and with each of these expansions came new jobs. The demand for cigarettes during World War II helped to maintain the expansion. During the war years Durham's two major companies supplied the nation with more than a quarter of its cigarette supply.<sup>85</sup> The war also brought many new residents to the Durham area. In 1941 the U.S. Army chose a site fifteen miles northeast of Durham for a thirty-thousand-acre training facility named Camp Butner. Over sixteen thousand employees were hired to construct the camp's facilities. By mid-1942 the first of thirty-five thousand soldiers and civilian army personnel began to fill the camp. Durham became the locus of most off-base activities: "Stores in town stayed open late Friday evenings hoping to catch in their tills as much of the \$500,000 weekly payroll as possible."<sup>86</sup> After the war, Durham benefited from another important federal investment. With the support of Duke University, the city was able to attract a veterans' hospital, built across the street from its own hospital on Erwin Road.

#### THE REST OF THE TRIANGLE AREA IN THE LATE 1800S AND EARLY 1900S

Durham's rapid growth and development during the late 1800s and early 1900s was not typical of other cities in the state or in the Triangle area. North Carolina lost over forty thousand men in the Civil War and its economy was left in shambles. Economic suffering was widespread, particularly among the one-third of the North Carolina population made up of freed slaves, many of whom migrated to nearby towns and cities in search of work that was not agricultural.

During the initial period of Reconstruction, progressive reforms were introduced by the Republican Party, which was largely made up of freed blacks, northern transplants, and antisecession whites. A new constitution "provided for universal manhood suffrage and basic legal rights for whites and blacks alike."<sup>87</sup> During this time, blacks were elected to local public offices and an effort was made to provide equal, albeit, separate facilities, including public schools, for blacks and whites. These progressive reforms were cut short, however, as the Conservative Democrats regained control of the General Assembly in 1870, and the governor's office in 1876. These changes soon brought about the disenfranchisement of the state's black population. Particularly hard hit was funding for public education: "Illiteracy was greater in 1880 than it had been in 1860, and the state had the dubious distinction of having the highest

illiteracy rate in the nation.”<sup>88</sup> A new system of appointing county officials was instituted, rather than having them elected at the local level, so that Republicans and blacks could not regain political power.

As reflected in the history of Durham, between 1880 and 1900 the textile industry expanded rapidly in the Piedmont. Although some of those mills were built in cities such as Durham, mill locations largely followed the “Rhode Island Model” whereby individual mills were built along rivers and streams to utilize water power, and close to rail lines to receive raw materials and to ship finished products. Small mill villages were constructed around these mills to house at least a portion of their workers, while others commuted from surrounding farms. From the mill owners' perspective, an advantage of this pattern was that, because of these mills' dispersed locations, there was little competition for employees, which made it difficult for workers to organize. This decentralized industrial pattern also helped to reinforce North Carolina's already dispersed settlement pattern and keep its cities, including those in the Triangle area, relatively small.

The pro-business Democrats remained in control of state politics until 1894 when the Populist and the Republican Parties joined together to put forth a “Fusion Platform,” calling for “fair elections, improved education for all children, lower interest rates and regulation of the railroads.”<sup>89</sup> Once in control of the General Assembly, the Fusion coalition raised taxes on the railroads and businesses, funded public schools for both blacks and whites, and reinstituted the election of county officials. Once again, however, Democrats—with the assistance of the Ku Klux Klan—were soon using the specter of black domination to undermine support for these reforms. Thus, they regained power in 1900, and held on to it for the next seventy-two years.

In the early 1900s the business-friendly, antiunion policies of the state's leaders led to rapid industrial growth. By 1920 North Carolina was the premier industrial state in the Southeast, but it ranked forty-fifth in the nation in average factory wages. The Depression hit North Carolina as hard as other states, but the Triangle area fared somewhat better given its heavy concentration of government and university employees. World War II led to the expansion of many industries in the state, including textiles in the Piedmont and shipbuilding on the coast. It also led to the creation and expansion of military bases: Fort Bragg, sixty miles south of Raleigh, and Camp Butner.

During this time, community leaders in Raleigh continued efforts to diversify the economy of the city and to improve its infrastructure. One approach was to establish a land grant university in the city. In 1875 the General Assembly used the interest from its Morrill Act fund to create an experimental agricultural station at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Soon after, Leonidas L. Polk, the state commissioner of agriculture, began a campaign to move that station to Raleigh.<sup>90</sup> He also suggested that the agricultural station

include an industrial college. Raleigh boosters picked up on this idea and formed the Watauga Club, whose purpose was to create in Raleigh a school similar to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Walter H. Page, a local newspaper editor and member of the club, argued that “our people need it and have sought it because they wish to see Raleigh a place of manufacture and this she must be if anything more than a seat of government.”<sup>91</sup>

The efforts of the Watauga Club paid off. In 1885 the General Assembly authorized an agricultural and industrial college to be constructed in a city that would donate land for the school and contribute to its construction. Raleigh's government and business leaders raised \$8,000, agreed to donate thirty acres of land west of downtown, and aggressively lobbied the General Assembly to select Raleigh as the site of this new school. In 1887, the General Assembly did choose Raleigh as the site of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and the area had what would become its third major research university.



Figure 12. The N.C. State campus in 1909 (courtesy of the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries).

The college accepted its first students in 1889 and by 1900 it had a student body of 250.<sup>92</sup> Although engineering was its most popular subject, a department of agricultural extension was added in 1909, and expanded in 1914, as federal funding became available to support this activity. Over the next fifteen years the college added programs in business, textiles, forestry, and education. After World War II the student body grew rapidly as the returning soldiers took advantage of the educational support provided by the GI Bill. In 1947 the college had over 5,000 students, more than twice its pre-war enrollment. In 1965 the school's name was changed to North Carolina State University to reflect its size, national stature, and comprehensive curriculum. Today North Carolina State University has a full range of well-respected liberal arts

and science, engineering, agriculture, architecture, and other programs. Its student enrollment has grown to over 30,000.

During this time two black educational institutions were founded in Raleigh, establishing it as a center for the education of blacks in the South. St. Augustine's Normal and Collegiate Institute was founded in 1867 by the Protestant Episcopal Church, with support from the Freedman's Bureau, on a site ten blocks east of the state Capitol.<sup>93</sup> Its original curriculum focused on technical and trade-related knowledge and skills but this was quickly expanded to include liberal arts. In 1919 it began to offer postsecondary education and its name was changed to St. Augustine's Junior College and in 1927 it expanded again to offer four-year college degrees. Officially incorporated in 1875, Shaw University was the first historically black college or university in the South. It grew out of theology classes taught by a former Union Army chaplain, H. M. Tupper, with support from the American Baptist Home Mission Society. By 1881 Shaw had added a women's college and a medical school. Over their long histories both St. Augustine's College and Shaw University have produced many notable alumni and their students played important roles in the civil rights movement.<sup>94</sup>

The late 1800s were also a time of expansion in Raleigh's urban infrastructure. The influx of blacks and others after the war had made Raleigh the second largest city in the state by 1880, behind the port city of Wilmington. In 1881, the General Assembly expanded Raleigh's boundaries a half mile in all directions. To support this growing population, a centralized water supply system, electric streetlights, and a mule-drawn streetcar system were introduced during the ensuing decade. In addition, R. Stanhope Pullen donated sixty acres of land adjacent to what was to become North Carolina State University for a city park. In the 1890s, while several cotton mills opened in Raleigh, its industrial development lagged behind many other cities in the state.

In 1911, Raleigh's Municipal Auditorium opened, providing a venue for large musical and theatrical performances. Besides a five-thousand-seat theater, it included municipal offices, a courtroom, police headquarters, and even a jail. The original building burned in 1930 but was quickly rebuilt. Today, the neoclassical Memorial Auditorium serves as one anchor for the recently reopened Fayetteville Street, the state Capitol serving as the second anchor. Like the state as a whole, Raleigh experienced the 1920s as boom years followed by the stock market crash of 1929. All eight of Raleigh's local banks succumbed to the country's economic turmoil. Because the city was the state capital, however, the local economy recovered more quickly than that of many other cities, and by the end of World War II "Raleigh's market in business real estate, stimulated by a wartime flow of money seeking an investment medium, has boomed as never before in the city's 150 years of existence."<sup>95</sup> One of these real estate projects built on the western edge of town

was Cameron Village, a 158-acre site offering 561 apartments, 100 single-family homes, and a shopping center. This award-winning development by J. W. York of Raleigh and R. A. Bryan of Goldsboro was Raleigh's first suburban shopping center. Many more were to follow.

While the city of Raleigh grew and developed, the towns of Chapel Hill and Hillsborough largely languished during these years. After the Civil War, Hillsborough benefited from small-scale tobacco manufacturing but its role in that industry was quickly eclipsed by Durham. Toward the end of the century a furniture factory and two large cotton mills were built in the vicinity of Hillsborough, but the once important town was largely frozen in time. It remained as the Orange County seat, but during the first half of the twentieth century Hillsborough's population increased by less than four hundred residents.

Chapel Hill also grew slowly after the Civil War as Union troops occupied the University of North Carolina campus, inflicting indignities on the university such as using the university library to stable their horses. Of greater concern to many, however, was the relationship between President David Swain's "beautiful and headstrong daughter" and the general in charge of the Union occupation.<sup>96</sup> After a whirlwind courtship they were married in August 1865. This union outraged many North Carolinians, and in 1868 Swain and the entire faculty were forced by the new Reconstruction government to resign. With no support coming from the General Assembly, the trustees were forced to close the university in 1871, and it remained closed until 1875, when the university's supporters persuaded the General Assembly to restore its funding. This closure had a profound influence on the town of Chapel Hill, which largely existed to serve the university's faculty and students.

It had also been isolated. Since its creation, the only way to get to or from Chapel Hill was by traveling at least eight miles on dirt roads. That finally changed in 1882 when a ten-mile rail spur was constructed from the North Carolina Railroad, which ran just south of Hillsborough. The impetus for building the line was the discovery of a vein of iron ore northwest of Chapel Hill. The mine owner lobbied for a rail line, and the university threw its support behind the project. To serve the mine and to protect the students from "the temptations of the outside world" the line was routed so that it terminated a mile west of the university.<sup>97</sup> Not only did this line create easier access to the university, it also served to attract several textile mills, which became the nucleus for Carrboro, a working-class town that developed on Chapel Hill's western border.<sup>98</sup>

Despite the rail link, the university and town continued to grow slowly. When Francis P. Venable assumed the presidency in 1900 the university had a state appropriation of \$25,000 and a faculty of forty. Venable, however, set high goals for the university. He wanted it to "serve the needs of the people of

North Carolina, to be the most outstanding university in the South, and to enhance the institution's standing among the nation's universities."<sup>99</sup> Although Venable made progress toward those goals before 1914 when he stepped down as president and resumed teaching, it was not until the 1920s that the university began to be recognized as one of the leading universities in the nation. Under the leadership of Harry W. Chase, who assumed the presidency in 1919 from Edward K. Graham who served as president between 1914 and 1918, enrollment began to swell, and both the curriculum and the campus were greatly expanded. University officials laid out a second quadrangle, anchored on one end by a new university library and on the other by South Building, and chose the colonial revival architectural style for the new buildings surrounding the quad. During Venable's tenure as president and professor, which ended in 1931, twenty new buildings were constructed on campus.



Figure 13. The University of North Carolina in 1919 (courtesy of the North Carolina Collection of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries).

During this time Chapel Hill's fortunes were still closely tied to those of the university. Thus, it was not until 1919 that Chapel Hill's main street, Franklin Street, was paved and even then it was only a strip eighteen feet wide down the center of the street, which was forty-five feet wide.<sup>100</sup> During the boom years of the 1920s, however, the town grew along with the university. Between the 1920s and the 1940s, the town's business district expanded outward, and many of its older wooden buildings were replaced by brick ones. The town's planning board promoted the Georgian style for downtown buildings and many developers complied. New residential development also began to spill over the town's limits, which were unchanged since being established in 1851. The influx of servicemen for various training programs during

World War II and the wave of new students after the war resulted in continued growth of the university and the town during the 1940s.

## CONCLUSION

By 1950 geological and historical forces had shaped the basic elements of the Triangle area. Those elements included three distinct towns, separated by eight to twenty-six miles of fields and woodlands, with unique histories, economic bases, population characteristics, and local cultures. The towns did, however, have two elements in common. The first was that each contained a major research university. The second was that they were largely developed at relatively low densities.

At this time the Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill area did not function like a metropolitan area but as a collection of distinct towns that happened to be near each other. The U.S. Census Bureau defined Wake and Durham Counties as two distinct metropolitan statistical areas. The physical distance and the lack of road capacity limited intercity commuting. The main road connecting Chapel Hill and Raleigh, for example, was NC 54, a narrow, two-lane road twenty-six miles long. Initial discussions were already under way however, that would knit these three distinct places together into one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country.