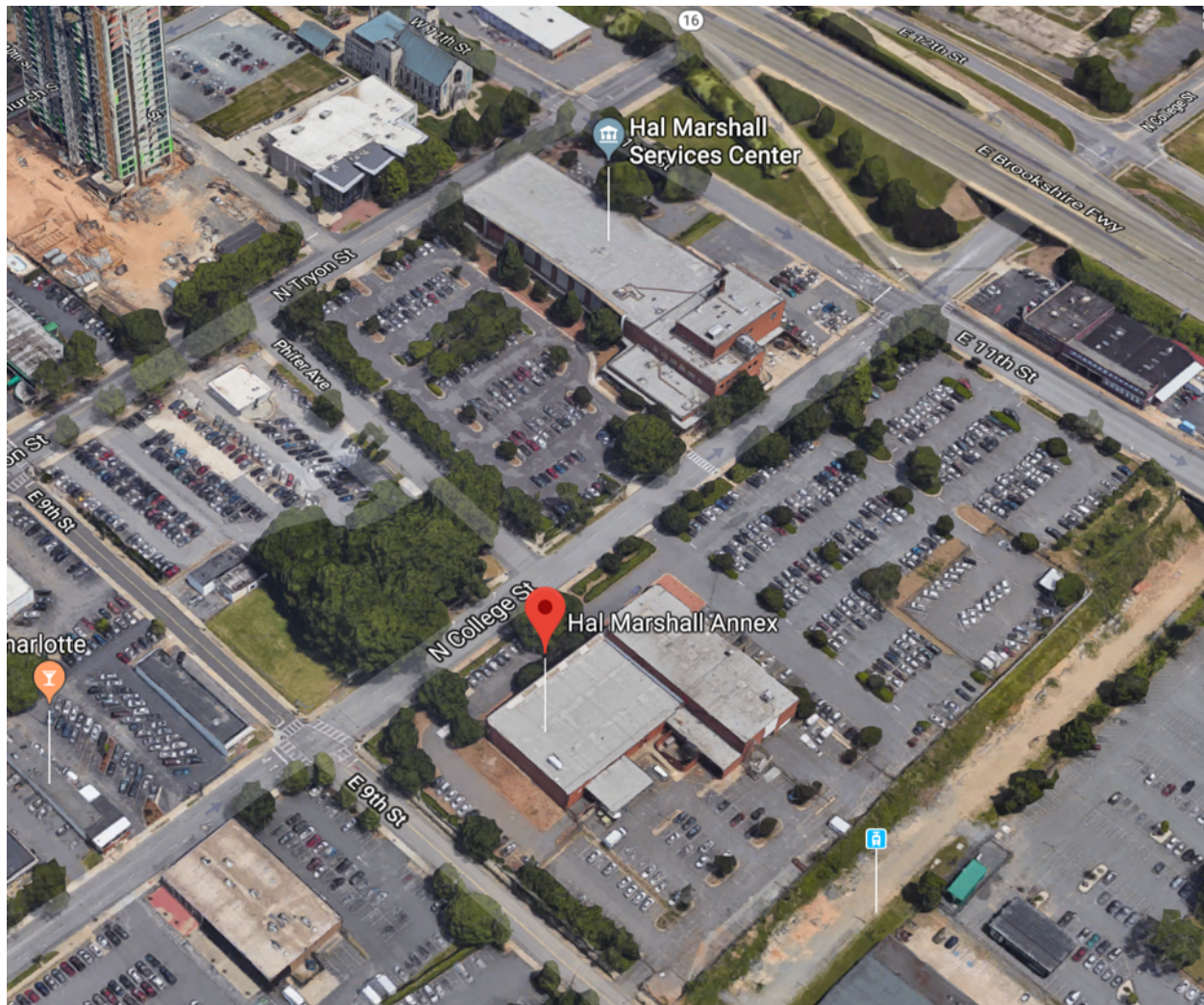


**History of the  
Hal Marshall Services Center and Annex  
site and environs  
in uptown Charlotte**

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Draft October 15, 2018  
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### Hal Marshall site history: executive summary

- Today's Queens University began in 1857 as Charlotte Female institute on the site of today's Hal Marshall Annex, 618 N. College Street.
- The Hal Marshall Center's main building at 700 N. Tryon Street was the site of the W.W. Phifer House, home of the owner of one of Charlotte's largest plantations on the eve of the Civil War.
- Confederate General GTP Beauregard made the Phifer house his headquarters in the waning days of the Civil War.
- Confederate President Jefferson Davis, fleeing southward after the fall of Richmond, held what some historians call the "last full meeting of the Confederate Cabinet" in the Phifer house, April 1865.

- W.W. Phifer's farmland became the numbered streets along the North Davidson corridor, including large parts of today's Belmont, Villa Heights, Optimist Park and NoDa neighborhoods. Cordelia Park on N. Davidson Street likely was named for Phifer's stepdaughter.
- The Phifer homesite lay within First Ward. It was one of four election districts marked off in 1869. The blocks around the homesite were mostly residential, with warehouses and small industrial structures along the railroad (current LYNX line).
- The Phifer house and the adjacent college building were demolished to build a semi-suburban shopping center which opened in 1949, anchored by a large Sears Roebuck department store (today's main Hal Marshall building) and one of Charlotte's first big supermarkets (today's Hal Marshall annex). Long-time Charlotteans today still refer to the Hal Marshall complex as "the old Sears building."
- Sears left for larger, newer and more suburban Eastland Mall in 1979. Mecklenburg County bought the complex the following year and renovated it for government office space.
- The complex got its name in 1985. It honored Hal Marshall, a long-time local government worker who rose to become a much-liked Mecklenburg County Manager, then died in a traffic accident in 1984.
- Today much of the land on the Hal Marshall blocks and nearby is vacant and used for parking. But nonetheless, nine designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks can be found within three blocks of the Hal Marshall site.
- Historical forces have wiped out most of uptown's affordable housing; that need looms large as decision-makers consider the next use for the Hal Marshall site.

## History of the Hal Marshall Center and Annex site and environs in uptown Charlotte

Charlotte Center Partners has requested information on the history of the Hal Marshall Center and its vicinity in Charlotte's First Ward. Dr. Tom Hanchett, Charlotte-based urban historian whose resume includes the book *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875 - 1975* (UNC Press) as well as neighborhood studies for Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, provides this overview.

### Hal Marshall Center and its surroundings today

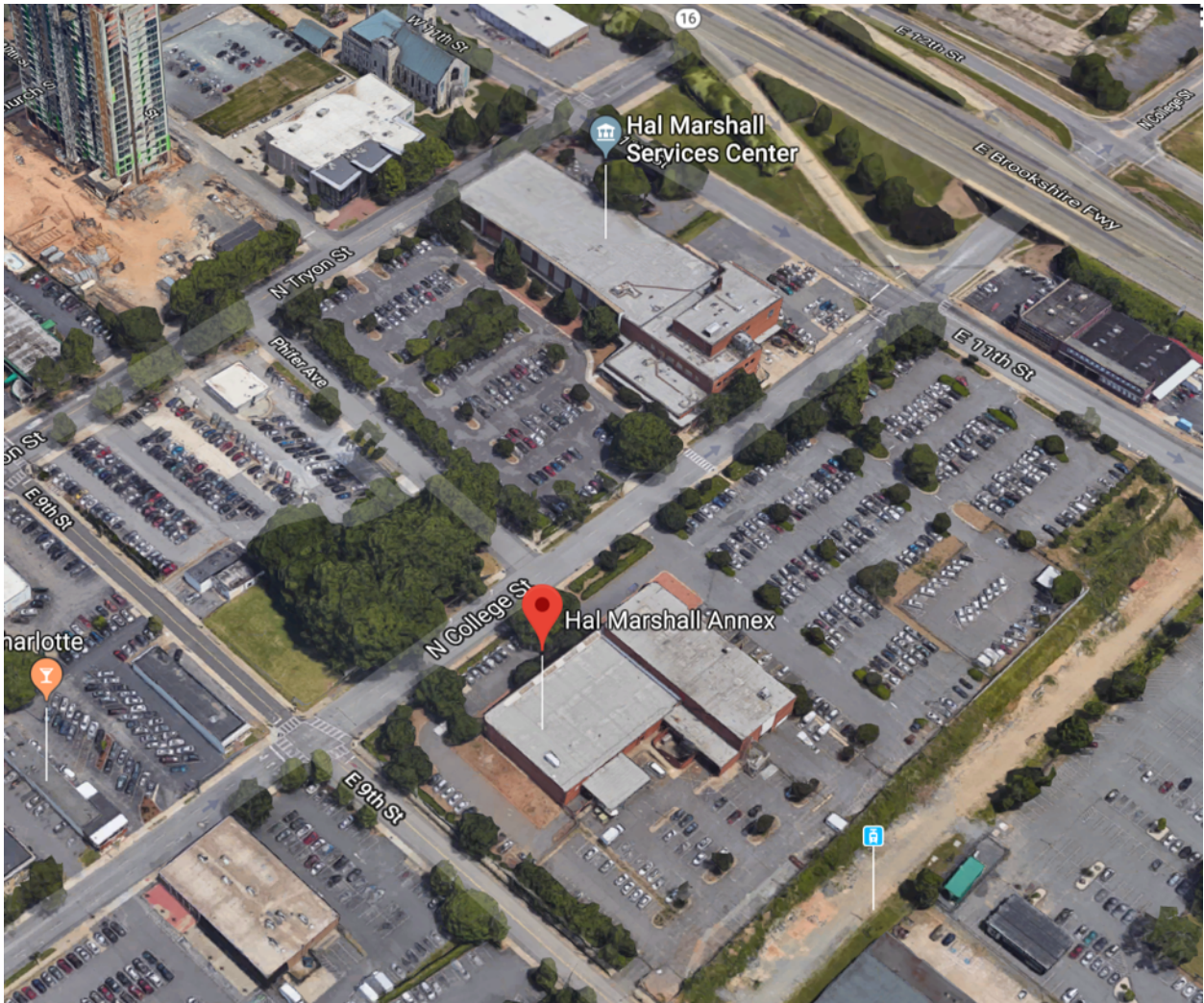
The Hal Marshall Center consists of a pair of low-rise red-brick buildings that hold Mecklenburg County government offices. Longtime Charlotteans still refer to it as "the old Sears building." The main structure, called the Hal Marshall Services Center, was built in 1949 as a department store by the Sears Roebuck chain. Hal Marshall Annex, on an adjacent block across College Street, is a renovated Colonial supermarket which originally opened at the same time. The Center covers two blocks bounded by North Tryon Street, East 11<sup>th</sup> Street, LNYX light rail line, East 9<sup>th</sup> Street, North College Street and Phifer Avenue.



The Hal Marshall Center's main building – former Sears department store – in 2018.



Hal Marshall Annex in 2018.



Aerial photo from Google Earth.

The site lies within the quadrant known as First Ward, one of the four nineteenth century election districts created when Charlotte was a small town contained within what is now the Interstate 277 expressway loop.

Today this area is near the very heart of the city and has seen great changes over time. Much of the land immediately adjacent to Hal Marshall is vacant and/or used for parking. However, some notable structures do exist within a three-block walk of the Hal Marshall Center:

***Notable structures within a three-block radius of Hal Marshall Center:***

- To the west across Tryon Street
  - McColl Center for Art and Innovation (1<sup>st</sup> Associated Reform Presbyterian Church, 1929, a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/surveys&rfirstarp.htm>)



1<sup>st</sup> ARP Church/McColl Center

- Charlotte Ballet's striking modernistic building completed in 2010 by Atlanta architects Smallwood Reynold Stuart.
  - The Vue, twin apartment towers and retail, completed in 2010s.
  - Beyond that to the west lies Fourth Ward, a residential area that includes late-20<sup>th</sup> century condominiums plus the Victorian homes of the Fourth Ward Historic District. Map and brief description: [http://charlottenc.gov/planning/HistoricDistricts/Pages/Home\\_copy\(1\).aspx](http://charlottenc.gov/planning/HistoricDistricts/Pages/Home_copy(1).aspx) Also <http://www.fofw.org/walkingtour>
- To the north across 11<sup>th</sup> Street
    - Interstate 277
    - Beyond the interstate is 1889 Alpha Cotton Mill, a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark that is today part of a residential complex whose development in the early 2000s was facilitated by the Revolving Fund of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/surveys&ralphamill.htm>



Alpha Mill



Seaboard Station



Standard Oil Station

- Also beyond the interstate is Urban Ministry Center for the homeless (Seaboard Railway Station, a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/essays/seabord.html>)
- Beyond the Seaboard (now CSX) railroad bridge are a handful of low-rise 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings. One is a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: Standard Oil gas station, 1920s, 1010 N. Tryon, the county's sole- surviving pre-WWII filling station <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&rStdOil.htm>)
- To the east across the LYNX light rail line
  - The LYNX line itself is the route of the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad. Built in the 1850s, it connected Charlotte with Columbia and thence with Charleston, opening tiny Charlotte to the global economy – the most significant turning point in the city's entire existence.
  - Beyond it are warehouses on East 9<sup>th</sup> Street built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and now owned by real estate investor Daniel Levine, who has recently renovated them for Charlotte Lab School, a charter academy.
  - Across from the Lab School is the UNC Charlotte Center City Campus, a green glass "stack of books" tower completed in 2011.
  - It overlooks First Ward Park (opened in 2015), and the Imaginon childrens library and theater by internationally renowned postmodern architects Holzman Moss Bottino in partnership with Gantt Huberman (2005), the current Google Fiber building (1908 Philip Carey Warehouse, a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/surveys&rcarey.htm>) and also 1st United Presbyterian Church, built by its African American congregation in 1896 (a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/surveys&r1stunitedpres.htm>)



- To the south across 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Phifer Avenue
  - One-block Phifer Avenue is itself of historical interest, named for W.W. Phifer whose Phifer Estate stood on the Hal Marshall site from the 1850s to 1948.
  - Phifer Avenue is also notable for its low concrete wall, a gathering place since at least the 1980s for Charlotte's homeless people, a site where helping individuals and organizations often meet to dispense food and other assistance.
  - On North Tryon out of sight of the Hall Marshall Center, but still within a three-block radius, are five historically important structures: the 1925 Hovis Funeral Home (516 N Tryon, a designated Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&rhovissprattfuneralhome.htm>), 1920s Tryon House Apartments (508 N. Tryon, not officially designated: <http://www.cmhpf.org/Surveys/Uptown%20Charlotte%20Survey/uptownsurveyguthery.htm>), 1921 Thies Auto Showroom (500 N. Tryon, a designated landmark: <http://www.cmhpf.org/Properties%20Foundation%20Reports/thies.html>), 1928 First Methodist Church (501 N. Tryon, not officially designated: <http://www.cmhpf.org/Surveys/Uptown%20Charlotte%20Survey/uptownsurveyfirstmethhistory.htm>), and 1940 Barringer Hotel ([www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&RBarringerHotel.htm](http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/Surveys&RBarringerHotel.htm))



Hovis Funeral Home



Tryon House Apartments



Thies Auto Showroom



Methodist Church



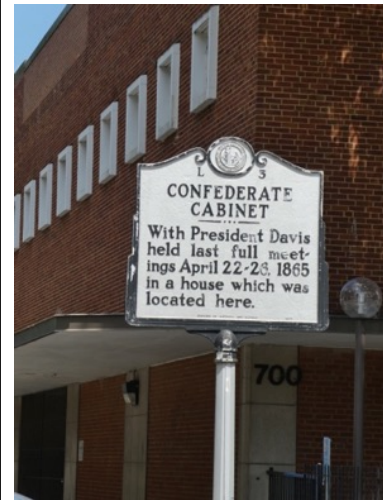
Barringer Hotel



## Section 1. Early history: the Phifer Estate



Early postcard view of the Phifer home.



2018 photo of NC marker.

<https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/turn-20th-century-life-charlotte-1900-1910-homes-houseware/phifer-house>

The William Phifer house, a grand red-brick example of fashionable Italianate style architecture, stood from the 1850s to the 1940s on what is today the front parking lot of the main building of the Hal Marshall Center. It was the seat of one of the largest of Charlotte's few antebellum plantations. Historian Mary Kratt described the Phifer House in her book *Charlotte: A Brief History*:

The Phifer home occupied an entire block, from Phifer Avenue to College Street to Eleventh, and included an elaborate front-yard garden, a sixty-foot well, springhouse, carriage house, garden house and smokehouse. It was only part of William Phifer's extended four-thousand-acre estate. Phifer had come to Charlotte from Cabarrus County in 1852. A wealthy planter and gentleman farmer who inherited his land and money, he was a descendant of early Swiss settler and assemblyman Martin Phifer of Rocky River. His household alone was a small village, housing in slave quarters the butlers, coachmen and maids who served the family. Phifer stabled his horses in a barn nearby and had a corral of mules. He predicted a great future for Charlotte. To that end, he sold part of his land behind his home on College Street for the Presbyterian College for Women. College Street gets its name from this institution.

Phifer was also known to abhor irregular lines, so he gave land to make nearby streets exactly perpendicular. He loved trees and Shakespeare's *King Lear*. His daughter Cordelia, "Miss Codie," wrote about life in the Phifer home: her mother's elegant food preparations, the carefully trained servants, the home designed by a Philadelphia architect and the carved rosewood furniture, also from Philadelphia. The parlor held a floor-to-ceiling bookcase. "The lower part had solid closed doors and was used by the master of the house for his own private place to keep papers and letters and business books, no one ever dared to invade the place."

Charlotte's good railroad connections made the town a destination for Confederate leaders in the latter days of the Civil War. Two of the era's most famous men spent time at the Phifer House: Confederate General G.P.T. Beauregard and the President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis.

General Beauregard, best known for commanding Fort Sumter at the start of the Civil War and winning the first Battle of Bull Run later in the conflict, made the Phifer House his headquarters in March of 1865. He swung through area on a mission that included fortifying an important railroad bridge at Nation's Ford on the Catawba River. Writes Kratt:

The gate of the William F. Phifer House at 722 North Tryon at Eleventh Street stayed mud-spattered from the constant arrival of mounted couriers to Beauregard's headquarters. The elegant home's generous family welcomed him and adjusted to constant interruptions and visitors. Military sentinels stood at the front door as messengers and officials entered through its Corinthian-pillared vestibule.

When Beauregard left the Phifers, he gave Willie Phifer a well-bred black mare that he himself rode and gave George Martin Phifer a pistol, 'upon the condition that it be used with his mother's consent.'<sup>1</sup>

Less than a month later, President Jefferson Davis, fleeing southward along the railroad after the fall of Richmond to Union forces, stopped in Charlotte for several days. He and members of his cabinet met at the Phifer House on April 26, 1865 – often said to have been the last full meeting of the Confederate cabinet. The group initially convened in a bank building on South Tryon Street: a plaque placed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy marks that spot. A few days later they gathered again at the Phifer residence. "Since Secretary of the Treasury George A. Trenholm was ill and a guest of the Phifers," writes Kratt, "the cabinet met in his bedroom."<sup>2</sup>

Other cities along the route of Jefferson Davis' flight also claim to have hosted the "last meeting." But, writes Michael C. Hardy, a careful historian of Civil War North Carolina: "Unlike Danville or Greensboro, in Charlotte all of the cabinet was present.... For a week, Charlotte was the capital of the Confederate government."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kratt, *Charlotte: A Brief History* (History Press, 2009), p. 70 – 72.

<sup>2</sup> Kratt, *Charlotte: A Brief History*, pp. 75 – 76.

<sup>3</sup> Michael C. Hardy, *Civil War Charlotte: Last Capital of the Confederacy* (History Press, 2012), pp. 64 – 67.

### ***William Phifer's role in development of Belmont, Villa Heights, and NoDA***

Much of Phifer's plantation land lay north of his house along the old Indian trading path that had become North Tryon Street. Surveyors had identified that as a route for the North Carolina Railroad, a state-funded track that held huge importance for the state. When it opened in 1856, it for the first time connected older eastern North Carolina and the capital of Raleigh with the emerging markets of Greensboro, Winston and Charlotte. The North Carolina Railroad would become the mainline of the mighty Southern Railway, billed as the "Main Street of the South," connecting the northeastern U.S with Atlanta and New Orleans. A competing railroad, part of the Seaboard Railway system (today CSX), crossed the Southern just north of Phifer's home. Together they made Phifer's land a hot commodity. Indeed, William Phifer likely bought his property with an eye to its future potential along the railroad lines. His son later remembered:

He ... predicted, in spite of the jeers of his friends, a great future for this town, and said he, "In later years there will be houses and streets where my plantation now lies, for," he continued, "the prospect for a city is better than any I saw at Atlanta, on my horseback trips to Alabama."<sup>4</sup>

Over the latter decades of the nineteenth century, Phifer and his children gradually laid out streets in the cotton land, choosing a grid-system with numbered cross-streets.<sup>5</sup> Today the area comprises large parts of the Belmont, Villa Heights, Optimist Park and NoDa neighborhoods extending from 11<sup>th</sup> Street through at least 34<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>6</sup> Cordelia Park on North Davison Street is believed to be named for Phifer's stepdaughter Cordelia White.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> J.B. Alexander, *The History of Mecklenburg County From 1740 to 1900* (Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1902), p. 170.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Hanchett, "The Belmont – Villa Heights – Optimist Park Survey Area" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/belmont-et-al.html>

<sup>6</sup> Tom Hanchett, "North Charlotte" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/NCharlotte.html> and Tom Hanchett, "The Belmont – Villa Heights – Optimist Park Survey Area" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/belmont-et-al.html>

<sup>7</sup> Tom Hanchett, "The Belmont – Villa Heights – Optimist Park Survey Area" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/belmont-et-al.html>

***Queens University of Charlotte was founded on the Hal Marshall Annex site***

William Phifer donated land adjacent to his mansion for a college that would eventually become Queens University of Charlotte. It opened as the Charlotte Female Institute in 1857 on College Street at Ninth Street – the site of today’s Hal Marshall Annex.<sup>8</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century it was known as the Presbyterian College for Women. It had a large and handsome NeoClassical style building with two-story high stone columns and a central dome, a Charlotte landmark as passersby on Tryon Street looked down Phifer Avenue.

In 1912 the new development of Myers Park lured the college away. Upper income Charlotteans, like urbanites all over the United States, were heeding the call of suburban living as newfangled streetcars allowed neighborhoods to sprawl outward. In Myers Park, Boston-based planner John Nolen gave the college grassy campus with five red-brick buildings. The college’s board gave it a new name: Queens College, later Queens University of Charlotte.

The Presbyterian College for Women building became apartments. The structure would survive into the 1940s.

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<sup>8</sup> Stewart Lillard, “Queens University of Charlotte,” *NCpedia* website, 2006. <https://www.ncpedia.org/queens-university-charlotte>



Looking down Phifer Avenue towards Presbyterian College for Women, 1908 postcard.  
<https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/robinson-spangler-north-carolina-room-image-collection-charlotte-postcard-collection-114>

## Section 2. After the Civil War: First Ward

The arrival of the railroads in the 1850s put Charlotte in quite a good position as the South emerged from the Civil War. Older plantation areas such as Charleston whose economies had relied upon slavery now languished. But Charlotte and other inland cities along the new railroads began to grow quickly. Leaders talked about forging a “New South” based on urbanization and industrialization.

Charlotte’s growth outstripped the old custom of a single voting place in the center of town. In 1851 local leaders created two Wards, each with its own polling place. City population doubled during the 1860s, to 4473 people at the decade’s end. So city fathers re-drew the election map to create four election districts in 1869.<sup>9</sup> Tryon Street and Trade street formed the dividing lines. First Ward lay at the northeast (First Ward School and First Ward Park still carry that name). Second Ward was at the southeast (including today’s Government Center), Third Ward at the southwest (Panthers football stadium vicinity now), and Fourth Ward at the northwest (behind Discovery Place science museum). The four Wards initially extended outward only as far as today’s Interstate 277 loop, then the edge of town.

All of the Wards were surprisingly diverse by today’s standards. Small houses and big houses, white and black residents, businesses and dwellings, all mingled “like salt and pepper,” according to one study.<sup>10</sup> Two blocks northeast of the Phifer house, the Alpha Mill opened in 1889, a cotton factory surrounded by a company-owned mill village of small rental cottages for workers.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere, blocks filled in with all manner of other buildings.

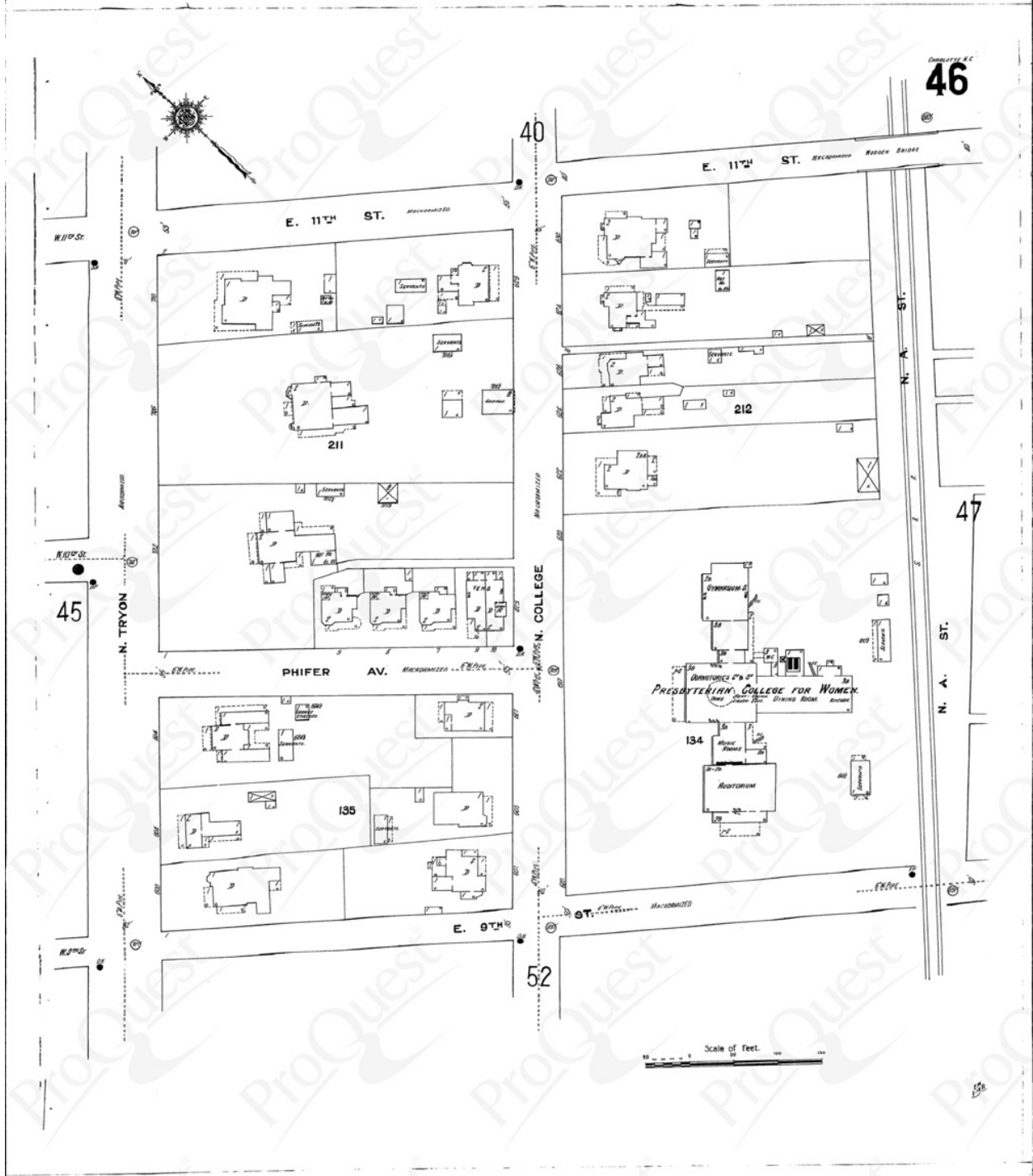
When the Sanborn company mapped the city for insurance purposes in 1911, it devoted almost a full page of its mapbook to the two blocks where the Phifer house and the former Presbyterian College for Women stood – today’s Hal Marshall site. Nearly 20 residences, both middle-sized and small, now crowded around the older buildings on those two blocks.

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<sup>9</sup> Tom Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875 – 1975* (UNC Press, 1998), p. 271. “Significant Properties, Center City: First Ward” (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/CenterCityProps1.html>  
Tom Hanchett, “The Business District and the Original Four Wards” (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1985). <http://cmhpf.org/educationneighhistcentercity.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Tom Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875 – 1975* (UNC Press, 1998), pp. 37 – 42.

<sup>11</sup> “Alpha Mill: Survey and Research Report” (Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1983). <http://www.cmhpf.org/S&Rs%20Alphabetical%20Order/surveys&ralphamill.htm>



Sanborn insurance map, 1911.

### Section 3. Mid-twentieth century: Sears, motels, then disinvestment

The fashion for suburban living that had pulled the Presbyterian women's college out to Myers Park continued to grow during the first three-fourths of the twentieth century. People with money and choice had little interest in living near downtown. The old houses became rental quarters, often owned by absentee landlords who spent little on upkeep. The landowners expected that the downtown business district would continue to expand, new stores and offices in time replacing the Victorian era dwellings. All Charlotte residents still did nearly all of their shopping downtown. America's shift to suburban retail plazas and malls would not begin until the late 1950s, starting in Charlotte with construction of Park Road Shopping Center in 1956.

As post-World War II prosperity put money into Americans' pockets, the nation's largest retailer invested in a wave of new "shopping centers." One of those Sears Roebuck department store projects would, of course, locate in the largest city of the Carolinas: Charlotte. In January of 1948 wrecking crews began clearing most of the Phifer and Presbyterian College blocks.

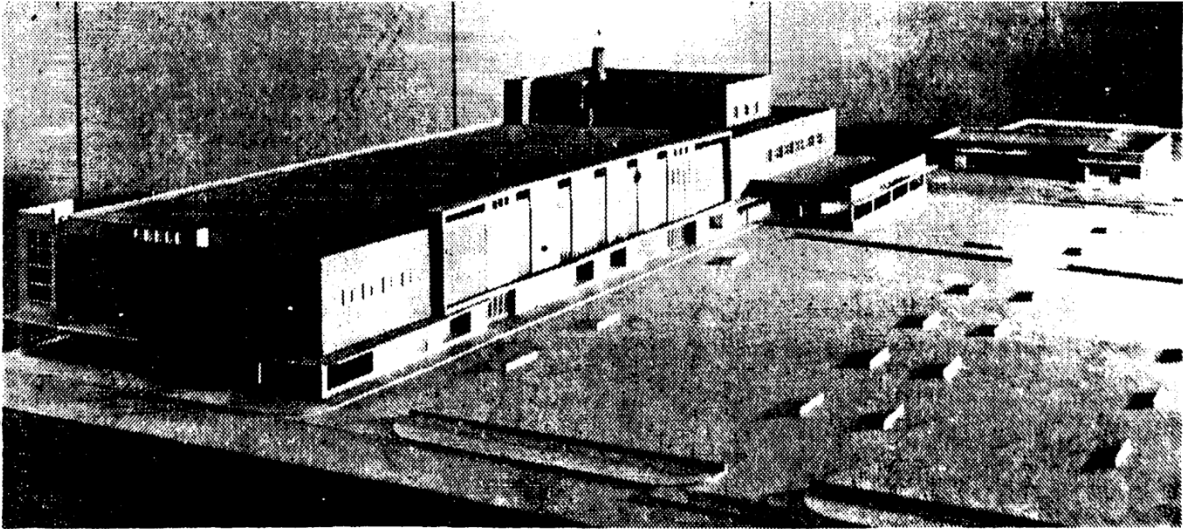
WRECKING for large 2 story buildings, with slate roof, one brick complete with plumbing, will sell whole house or any part of same, also heating units with these buildings. Everything goes to clear site for Sears Roebuck new store, 115-19-123-127 Phifer street. See Mr. Taylor on lot.

*Charlotte Observer*, January 27, 1948.

The carefully chosen location -- outside the business district, but not out in the suburbs -- was part of a concerted strategy by Sears Roebuck in city and after city nationwide. Sears hoped to grab customers who were used to coming downtown, but to give them easy free parking which no downtown merchant possessed. Explained Sears Board Chair General R.E. Wood when he visited from Chicago in 1949 to open the new facility: "In every United States city, the shopping district is getting congested. So Sears provided for that problem of parking." The two blocks together could hold 600 cars. Marveled the *Charlotte News* reporter, "Through the window where the interview took place could be seen a large area of parking space surfaced with concrete that glimmered in the bright sunlight."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Gen. Wood Here for Sears Opening," *Charlotte News*, May 4, 1949.



**SEARS, ROEBUCK'S CHARLOTTE PROJECT**—The picture shows a model of the Sears, Roebuck and company development on North Tryon and North College streets. The three-story building is the big "A" store being erected on Tryon street, and the other is the service station being built on College street. The large space at the front of the store and other space around the service station will be

paved to provide parking space for 600 cars. Officials report that this will be the largest Sears, Roebuck store in the Carolinas, that construction is moving according to schedule, and that the new store will be opened in the spring. The model from which the photograph was made will be displayed in the basement of the present store in a few days.

Your New  
**SEARS**  
ROEBUCK AND CO.  
in Charlotte

IT'S ALL YOURS, CHARLOTTE!



**OPENS THURSDAY 9:30 a.m.**

**Charlotte's Most Complete Modern Department Store!**

*All roads lead to the*  
**NEW SEARS**



**Good Quality Costs Less at Sears!**

Sears Sells Only First Quality — No Seconds or Irregulars!

**NEW ADDRESS - 700 NORTH TRYON STREET**

**6 Stores within a Store!**

Whether it's something to wear or something for the home, lawn or car, you'll find it at your new Sears! Family Wearables, Home Furnishings, Appliances, Motorization and Repair, Automobile and Farm Store — all brand new and jam-packed with values for all of Charlotte.

**One-Stop Shopping!**

There is one spot you can shop for ALL your needs. Every department has been designed and laid out with an attentive eye to YOUR comfort to save you time as well as money in your daily shopping.

**Ample Free Parking!**

No more straining to get into a tiny parking spot, no more wear and tear on the curbs. Sears' huge free parking lot holds over 600 cars. Park and shop with ease at your new Sears.

**Escalator Service!**

The newest and finest escalators give you smooth, effortless riding, and make your shopping day all the more enjoyable at your new Sears.

**Satisfaction Guaranteed or Your Money Back**



**SEARS**



May 4, 1949 *Charlotte Observer*

Along with the Sears store itself – today the main building of the Hal Marshall Center on North Tryon Street – the project also included two structures across College Street on the old Presbyterian College block. Immediately opposite the department store stood a Sears automotive service center (no longer extant today). South of it, at Ninth and College streets, glistened a new Colonial grocery store – probably Charlotte first large “supermarket.”



Sanborn insurance map, 1953.

Sears department store (gray for concrete construction) is at upper left. Sears automotive center is at upper right (blue for masonry and steel).

Colonial supermarket is at lower right. Later renovated and expanded, it became today's Hal Marshall Annex.

In the 1940s grocery shopping was still a small-scale enterprise by today's standards. W.T. Harris's first market in 1936, for instance – predecessor of today's Harris Teeter chain – occupied a space of less than 2000 square feet wedged between other shops in Plaza Midwood's business district on Central Avenue. The "mammoth new super market" that the Colonial chain new opened on College Street, in contrast, occupied a custom-built structure of well over 10,000 square feet set apart by itself amid its own parking lot. Among its many innovations was a "100% Self-Service Meat Dept," trumpeted an opening ad. "Here is streamlined shopping at its best ... no more waiting ... reach right in and serve yourself."<sup>14</sup>

**IT'S NEW!**  
**IT'S MODERN!**  
**IT'S HERE!**

# LET'S GO CHARLOTTE!

TO THE GALA OPENING OF COLONIAL'S  
MAMMOTH NEW SUPER MARKET  
COLLEGE & NINTH STS.  
IN THE NEW SEARS SHOPPING CENTER

Every one is going! It's Charlotte's finest food store... the last word in modern convenient food shopping. Actually 5 big stores in one—grocery, produce, meat, bakery and delicatessen—it brings really complete one-stop food shopping to you!

This is your dream of a food store of tomorrow—here today! It features amazing innovations in every department. Come in and look around... compare quality, prices and service—then you'll shop Colonial!

Prices In This Ad Effective  
In All Charlotte Colonial Stores

**SELF SERVICE MEATS**

**COLONIAL STORES**

**100% SELF-SERVICE MEAT DEPT.**

Here is streamlined shopping at its best... no more waiting... reach right in and serve yourself. Come in today—save lots more time you save shopping the old-fashioned way! You will like the tremendous variety available here... all in hand-picked, top-grade, meat and poultry... carefully selected and priced. Each and every item is hand-packed and sealed in its military protective cellophane wrapper. Colonial unconditionally guarantees each cut of meat you buy!

**PRESSED AND DRAWN—READY FOR THE PAN**

**FRYERS — lb. 49¢**

CUT-UP FRYERS

BREASTS, lb. ....	39¢	LEGS, lb. ....	89¢
WINGS, lb. ....	43¢	NECKS & BACKS, lb. ....	

Ready to Serve

**OPEN THURSDAY, FRIDAY,  
& SATURDAY NIGHT 'TIL 9 P. M.**

No other all-Charlotte cut have an opportunity to visit this marvelous new store does will remain open until 8 P. M. Thurs., Fri., and Sat. in this store only.

**PRICE JUST REDUCED!**

**SPRY or CRISCO**

1-lb. Can	<b>33¢</b>	3-lb. Can	<b>93¢</b>
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WITH SNAPS—MARGARET HOLMES

**FIELD PEAS 2 25¢**  
No. 1 Can

GRAND ON TOAST—DEEP SOUTH SEEDLESS BLACKBERRY

**PRESERVES 2 25¢**  
12-oz. Jar

Charlotte Observer, May 5, 1949.

<sup>14</sup> Charlotte Observer, May 5, 1949.

With the Sears shopping center open, North Tryon now became a commercial gateway to uptown. During the 1950s and 1960s, motels replaced the hardworn old houses on blocks near the Sears land. One was the Manger Motor Inn, considered the best dining destination in the city in the early 1960s. The Manger played a role in Civil Rights history when white Mayor Stan Brookshire and black leaders Frederick Douglas Alexander and Moses Belton ate together there in May of 1963, starting the desegregation of Charlotte's upscale restaurants – an action that put Charlotte ahead of much of the South.<sup>15</sup>

But North Tryon's commercial flowering proved short-lived. Since Colonial times, Tryon had been the entrance to the city from the north. In the 1960s, federal interstate highways ended that function. Interstate 77 opened in sections during the decade, taking away much of the through-traffic that the motels depended upon. In the 1970s two huge regional malls went up at the city's suburban rim: SouthPark in upscale southern part of Charlotte and Eastland in the middle-income east. Fewer and fewer folks chose to come downtown to shop. The center city languished.

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<sup>15</sup> "Forging Equality Charlotte's Way – Pressures from Inside, Outside were Key to Integrating Restaurants," *Charlotte Observer*, May 26, 2013. "Helping Charlotte Find Its Way Fifty Years Ago," *Charlotte Observer*, May 31, 2013. "Smashing Segregation: The Struggle is Not Over," *Charlotte Observer*, May 8, 1997. The Manger Motor Inn was demolished in 2000s.

## Section 4. Hal Marshall Center, 1980s – 2010s

When Sears left for shiny new suburban Eastland Mall in 1979, no one seemed to want its old quarters. The Charlotte Uptown Community Development Corporation, predecessor of today's Charlotte Center City Partners, worked hard to find a business use for the space. CUCDC had recently been launched at the behest of Dennis Rash and Hugh McColl at NCNB (later to become Bank of America). Rash had led in securing designation of the handful of surviving Victorian houses in Fourth Ward as Charlotte's first Historic District in 1976. He and McColl dreamed that fresh energy generated by Fourth Ward might bring vitality back to the center city. But in an era when department stores and other retailers were actively leaving uptown, their call to keep the old Sears property a retail center won no traction. Mecklenburg County bought the buildings in 1980 and renovated them for government office space.<sup>16</sup>

The complex got its name in 1985. It honored Harold R. "Hal" Marshall, a long-time local government employee who rose to become a much-liked Assistant County Manager. Educated at University of Georgia, he spent his early work-life in Atlanta, then came to Charlotte for a 17-year career. When Marshall died in a traffic accident in 1984, local leaders designated the administrative complex in his memory. Legislator Fountain Odum characterized Marshall as "a walking, talking computer with information at his fingertips and on the tip of his tongue and such a dry, pleasant sense of humor." Said County Manager Jerry Fox, "Hal Marshall was county government to many people for many years."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Uptown Group Fights County Use of Sears Store," *Charlotte Observer*, November 30, 1980.

<sup>17</sup> "County Official's Friends Mourn His Death in Charlotte Wreck," *Charlotte Observer*, September 27, 1984.

# County Official's Friends Mourn His Death In Charlotte Wreck

KATHY DOHERTY and TED MELLNIK

Staff Writers

Assistant County Manager Hal Marshall, who died in a traffic accident Wednesday, was mourned in Mecklenburg County offices where elected officials and co-workers remembered an efficient administrator with a keen memory and equally keen wit.

"Hal Marshall was county government to many people for many years," said County Manager Jerry Fox. Marshall's 17 years with the county included a three-month stint as acting manager before Fox's arrival in 1980.

"I would say he was one of the most knowledgeable persons I've ever met in local government," said Fountain Odom, chairman of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners.

"He was an amazing person. Like a walking, talking computer with information at his fingertips and on the tip of his tongue and such a pleasant, dry sense of humor," Odom said.

Marshall, 48, of 7440 Applecreek Dr., died when his red Dodge Aspen crossed a median near the Charlotte Coliseum, 2700 E. Independence Blvd., and crashed into a truck about 7:40 a.m.

Fox said, "Everything he was asked to do by my predecessors, myself and the many county commissioners, he did with enthusiasm, timeliness and professionalism. I leaned on him a lot and I will dearly miss him as a friend and as a member of our management team."

Fox was to have met Marshall's wife, Mary, at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport Wednesday night. She had been visiting relatives. The couple had no children.

Many county employees tended quietly to their jobs in a subdued County Office Building Wednesday.

Melba von Sprecken, director of the county's hot-

lunch program, spent part of Wednesday preparing meals for Marshall's family.

Rita Simpson, county public information director, said, "I loved him dearly. Everyone of us feel we've lost the best friend."

Commissioner Marilyn Bissell said, "Hal Marshall was one of the best county employees we have and so knowledgeable about things that happened in the past that we will be lost without him. He was a walking encyclopedia."

"You could always count on top quality work," said commissioner Tom Ray. "He was sweet-tempered — he never fell out with anybody. I probably chatted with him almost every day in the six years I've been in office."

Marshall's car hit an eastbound tractor-trailer loaded with turkeys.

The accident snarled rush-hour traffic on Independence Boulevard — Charlotte's major east-west artery — for much of the morning. The road was reopened before noon.

The truck, owned by Kerns Trucking Inc. of Kings Mountain, was transporting turkeys from a farm near Polkville to a processing plant in Raeford.

Police identified the driver of the truck as W.C. Ratchford, 39, of Gastonia. He was not injured, police said.

The truck jackknifed and dragged Marshall's car 120 feet, crossed the median into westbound traffic and hit a 1984 Honda driven by Everett Thompson of Charlotte. Thompson also was not injured, police said.

Marshall earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of Georgia, and worked in Atlanta until 1967, when he came to Mecklenburg County.

He was assistant county accountant, county accountant, county budget officer and was named an assistant county manager in 1974.

He most recently supervised county departments of engineering, police, parks and recreation and building standards, and the sheriff's department and courts.



Marshall

## Section 5. Today: urgent need for affordable housing

The Hal Marshall site hit the headlines once again in the mid 2010s. Charlotte Center City Partners, the Foundation for the Carolinas and other entities put together a task force to produce a North Tryon Vision Plan, chaired by high-ranking executive Cathy Bessant of Charlotte-based Bank of America. Could the parking lots and underused buildings, including the aging Hal Marshall complex, be redeveloped with more intensive land-use to bolster the vitality of Uptown?

History suggests that affordable housing should be high on the list. For most of the twentieth century, housing for working-class people and those below them on the economic ladder was abundant in Uptown, especially in the Hal Marshall vicinity. The old Presbyterian College for Women that became apartments, the Victorian dwellings that became rooming houses as they fell from fashion, the motels along North Tryon Street – all allowed Uptown’s essential but low-wage workers to live near jobs, services and transportation.

Since the mid 1960s, nearly every unit of that “naturally occurring affordable housing” (planners abbreviate it as NOAH) has melted away.

- In Second Ward, an entire African American neighborhood called Brooklyn fell to the federally-funded bulldozers of “urban renewal” circa 1968, displacing over 7000 people – and creating no new housing.
- In Third Ward, community leader Mildred Baxter Davis worked successfully with Hugh McColl and Dennis Rash during the 1980s to save several blocks of small houses largely owned by low- and moderate-income African Americans, but most of the rest of the land in the Ward became upscale housing or other new construction including Panthers football stadium.
- In Fourth Ward, Rash and others rescued about two dozen Victorian houses from absentee speculators and created Fourth Ward Historic District in 1976 – but by then much of the rest of the Ward was empty land.
- In First Ward, a concerted effort focused on mixed-income housing in the 1990s. A federal “Hope VI” grant was used to re-invent a public housing project called Earle Village. Some low-income residents stayed, while middle- and upper-income people joined them by 1997. It demonstrated that mixed-income could be highly desirable – but it housed fewer poor people than had lived in Earle Village.

Where the four uptown Wards had 17,574 inhabitants in 1960, most of them low on the economic scale, today there are once again roughly that same number of residents – but probably fewer than 1000 are low-income.<sup>18</sup>

That situation is being exacerbated by rapid gentrification of older neighborhoods surrounding the center city. Experts at the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development say that Charlotte is short 34,000 units of affordable housing.<sup>19</sup>

Recent history offers a model for the Hal Marshall project. In 2015 Mecklenburg County launched the redevelopment of land in uptown's Government Center with the aim of creating Brooklyn Village, a high-density mixed-use project with offices, retail and housing. The County set forth a requirement that the competing developers must build at least three percent of the residential units for low-income tenants. To their surprise, all the bidders surpassed that figure; the winning team promised ten percent of units would be affordable housing.<sup>20</sup>

The County could likewise dedicate a substantial portion of the Hal Marshall site to a mix of market-rate and affordable housing. History shows that concerted government involvement has been the only effective way to create new affordable units.

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<sup>18</sup> Number of residents today is estimated at approximately 17,500 in "2018 State of the Center City Charlotte," (Center City Partners, 2018), p. 16.

Number of residents in 1960: data for Census Tracts One, Two, Five and Six in "General Characteristics of the Population by Census Tract" Charlotte (U.S. Census, 1960).

Economic status of residents in 1960: "Residential Blight in Charlotte" (Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission, 1962), <http://digitalcollections.uncc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p16033coll21/id/10554>

Note that the Brooklyn neighborhood included Census Tracts Two and Three, both completely demolished by urban renewal. Tract Three now lies outside of the I277 loop (vicinity of McDowell and Baxter streets), so is not included in the above totals for the Center City then or now.

<sup>19</sup> "Commentary – Affordable Housing Has a Lot of Support. How Do We Get There?" *Charlotte Observer*, February 5, 2017. "This Report Shows Why So Many People Struggle to Afford Housing," *Charlotte Observer*, June 20, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> "Growth and Development – Here are Five Big Moves Charlotte Needs to Make in Affordable Housing, Advocates Say," *Charlotte Observer*, March 29, 2017. "Second Ward – County Selected \$683.3m Plan for Brooklyn Village," *Charlotte Observer*, June 16, 2016. "Eye on Development – Three Big Questions about the Plan to Redevelop Brooklyn Uptown," *Charlotte Observer*, May 29, 2016.

## **Appendix: Affordable housing in Uptown, 2018**

Draft list by Tom Hanchett (may be incomplete)

First Ward: Mixed-income apartments and senior housing administered by Charlotte Housing Authority (approximately 300 units), plus Grace Emmanuel Apartments (50 units) owned by United House of Prayer for low-income seniors.

Second Ward: Today a new Brooklyn Village is being planned which will include approximately 100 new affordable housing units – admirable, but tiny compared to what was lost.

Third Ward: Neighborhood and bank leaders in the early 2000s arranged construction of Sycamore Green (now called Ten-05 West Trade), a mixed-income mid-rise with 78 affordable units – again commendable but tiny.

Fourth Ward: There are two apartment communities for low-income seniors: Edwin Towers by Charlotte Housing Authority (176 units) and Booth Gardens (260 units) by the Salvation Army.