



***Our Community: Charlotte  
History Channels Who We Are Today!***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Social Studies/ Grade 3.

**Keywords:** Catawba Indians, trading post, Hornets Nest, gold rush, textiles, New South, cotton, prosperity, Great Depression, banking, hydroelectric power.

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** My vision for this unit is to expose the students to many historical events that shaped our community to know the city they live in today. These events have transformed our community for over 300 years; from the 1700s until present time in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The students will be researching specific events in the history of the Charlotte and examine how the timing of these events affected the growth of the city of Charlotte during that time period.

They will identify important figures in the different fields mentioned in this unit like farmers, politicians and business owners, who influenced the city's history. They will identify many events like the discovery of gold, the effects of several wars on the region, the coming of the railroad and automobiles, and the business boom brought in by the cotton and tobacco mills through the movement of those goods. They will explain how these events have made an impact on our city as well as how they intertwine with the influence of new technology and scientific discoveries. The students will interpret how these technologies improved many businesses which allowed the city to flourish towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to (specify number) students in (specify courses or curriculum areas/grade levels).*

*I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Our Community: Charlotte History Channels Who We Are Today!**

*Rosa W. Bockian*

### **Overview**

I have always been fascinated by History for as long as I can remember. I would eagerly observe any books or photographs that I could get my hands on. When my mother would take us on trips, I was mesmerized visiting the local museums. My hand would be the first one up to ask questions during any tour. I love history; I learned about different worlds and cultures through books and travelling.

Now that I'm an elementary school teacher, I can inspire many young minds. It's my goal to urge my students to love books and explore how history has influenced our world. By making a connection with the city we all call 'home,' I hope to encourage them to venture further to learn about different places and cultures. I want my students to inquire how events across the globe can affect us here, at home.

I will help them understand how the past shaped the future, through the web that holds together our city and the world; History. By teaching the history of Charlotte, I will develop a deeper appreciation of our city's struggles and success, as well as being proud to be part of this amazing city.

### **School and Student Background**

I am a third grade teacher at Collinswood Language Academy, a K-8 CMS Magnet Language School. It was the first bilingual immersion program offered in the state of North Carolina back in 1997. This is my second year teaching third grade after being an elementary teacher assistant for almost ten years in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools district. I have a Language Arts- Science partner with whom I share my wonderful students as we switch at half day. That allows us to teach the required courses in our target languages: English and Spanish. Our school has been awarded many honors. In 2014, Collinswood Language Academy was awarded the Magnet Schools of America School of Excellence Award. In the same year, we received another award as the International Spanish Academy School of The Year.

Our mission statement is "*Celebrating World Cultures and Embracing Diversity Through Two Languages*". Our beliefs include that every child can learn to cherish diversity, build strong character traits and reach the community for support.

The demographic of my school is about 45% Hispanic, 35% White and 20% Black American. Over half of the 750 students receive free or reduced lunch. Our program has high expectations for achievement as well as a high level of parent involvement; even though these percentages should show a different outcome.

To keep up with the pace of higher education and modern technology, all our classrooms are suited with Smart Boards, document cameras, and Smart TVs in the Special Areas' classrooms. Last year, we acquired iPads and Chromebooks for all the students to enhance our teaching standards.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 48 students in my 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Social Studies class. I use a simple system to encourage students to participate and demonstrate good citizenship in our classroom community. I give out stickers, which they collect on a sticker chart and which they are completely responsible to keep secure. They earn stickers for making the right choices: finishing classroom work in a timely manner, participating in our daily discussions, and doing their weekly jobs to improve the living conditions of our small classroom community.

They lose stickers for not following our classroom rules, interrupting our learning time, and not having or completed their daily homework. This small community atmosphere that I try to create in the classroom reflects the life of any citizen in a real town. As a resident, you get rewarded for your hard work with your paycheck or getting a promotion; or receive consequences like losing your job for not completing your work. This atmosphere allows my students to experience that anything they do can influence the people and their lives around us, in a positive or negative way.

## **Rationale**

I had the honor to be accepted into this year's Charlotte Teacher's Institute. I'm part of the seminar titled Intersections of Science, Technology, and Literature. As part of the third grade Social Studies curriculum, we study what makes a community thrive and its integral components such as government and citizenship, economy; events like immigration, and national and local celebrations.

I foresee my students applying to their daily live what they learn in the classroom as a responsible citizen and a productive member of a community. I moved to Charlotte in 1991, and as a new resident embarked on the mission to understand its history as it is the place that I call home. I'm very proud to be a Charlotte resident and have reach to my neighbors in the Queen City while working at school and at the YMCA. Having experienced the same wonders and feelings that my students might have, it has been a personal satisfaction sharing my discoveries and memories with them.

I have learned to appreciate Charlotte's rich history. I enjoyed studying all the ups and downs that made us a central point in many historical events of our nation. It is my goal that my students discover how regional events made headlines in the United States, and even affected the world.

### **Content Objectives/ Essential Questions**

Objectives of this unit:

1. Explain how events, people, and ideas contribute to the political, social, economic and environmental development of their community.
2. Compare and contrast how our community had change over time using specific targets such as housing and families in the 1800's and its counterparts today.
3. Discover how technology has impacted communication and transportation over time.
4. Read historical narratives of community's leaders and events to understand the changes that they cause in a community.
5. Demonstrate how the presence of natural resources in a location will affect economic development.
6. Recognize how multiple points of view can be used to have a better understanding of the past.
7. Discuss that diverse cultures are present throughout local communities.
8. Understand how values, beliefs, and traditions influence people living in a community.
9. Show how different forms of text and art can be used to express the beliefs, traditions, and values of a community.

Essential Questions:

*How did the discovery of gold transform Charlotte from a small town to a city?*

*How did the construction of train tracks influence the growth of the textile industry in Charlotte?*

*How did the boom of the textile industry influence the standard of living in Charlotte?*

*Why women and children were brought to work in the operation of the cotton mills?*

*What factors affected the trifold increase of Charlotte's population during the 1900-1920s?*

*Which events transformed Charlotte to become a central part in the financial system being developed around the 1950s?*

*How the arts flourished with the influence of the Black American community?*

*Which changes occurred in the community after the construction of the hydroelectric plant in Lake Norman?*

*How the car racing's business has influenced the ways to entertain the citizens of the Charlotte community?*

### **Teaching Strategies**

The activities planned for this unit will enrich the knowledge of the students by integrating tangible materials to assist in their learning. The students will use historical articles and maps, examine photographs, and use web resources to describe each time period. The curriculum will include visits to the Museum of History- home of Hezekiah Alexander, the Levine Museum of the New South and the McGuire Nuclear Station located in Lake Norman.

Each activity is composed of several teaching strategies like personal observations, visual aids including SmartBoard presentations, web research, and writing exercises to cover the different learning styles present in the classroom. I will give assessments to the students in accordance to the national and state common core state standards.

### **Background Information**

I will present important figures and events to my students following the timeline included in the beginning of this unit. They will recognize key events in the history of Charlotte and summarize their effects in the growth of the community. I'm mostly interested in presenting some history of the Black American population that worked in the plantations tending the crops of cotton, corn, or tobacco. Also, I will like my students to find possible reasons why they were pay a minimal wage compare to the white workers; while working in the mills and manufacturing plants. While in this topic, they will examine why children were allowed to work in the mills during that period.

My third graders will identify how the construction of Lake Norman, which brought to the region hydroelectric power, changed the surrounding communities. They will make predictions about future changes that might happen if the growth trend continues for the next 10 years.

Important events that shaped our city to be use in the classroom activities:

- Before the 1750's- the way of living of the Catawba Indians. The Catawba Indians inhabited the lands around the Catawba River valley which is presently the lands around the border of North Carolina and South Carolina. Their daily activities consisted mainly of agriculture and hunting deer to trade their skins for other needed goods.
- From 1750-1800- the transition from an Indian village to a small town due to a Trading Post that was establish here as a result of two main crossroads which followed two trails; one was north to south, and the other east to west.

The town was incorporated in 1768. In May 20, 1775 during the Revolutionary War, county residents signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence which declares independence from England, ahead of our country's independence in 1776. In 1780, British General Lord Cornwallis fought in the area against local rebels. He found such resistance that he nicknamed it "a hornet's nest".

Slaves were working the crops, including cotton in the surrounding plantations and small farms. Charlotte was also a common route for the troops from both sides of the Revolutionary War against England.

- From 1800- 1850- how the town shifted from farming to commerce that was brought in by the discovery of gold. In 1799, John Reed discovered a seventeen pound gold nugget on his Cabarrus County farm. He used it as a doorstep until 1802 when a jeweler recognized it as gold, starting the North Carolina Gold Rush. Charlotte became a trade center for the first region in the nation that produced gold.
- 1837- The U.S. Treasury opened a mint branch in Charlotte to coin more than \$5 million in gold pieces till 1860s. Two of the main gold mines, Rudisill and St. Catherine, were located in what we know as downtown. The gold rush in Charlotte brought many businesses such as miners, engineers and metallurgist. The banks arrived to handle the transactions brought in by the gold rush.
- 1850- 1875- By 1850 the population around the town was about one thousand. The arrival of the railroad in 1852 made Charlotte a central place during the Civil

War and the beginnings of the cotton industry. Around 1870, Charlotte was at midpoint for the traveling soldiers during the fights between the Confederate and the Union troops. The railroads' technology opened the door for new industries derived from the war such as the making of canons, weapons and gunpowder to canteens and other accessories, as well as the manufacturing of the soldiers' uniforms. The railroads made it easier for the goods to reach the seaports and be distributed where needed.

The South offered a warm climate and rich soil for the cotton to grow. By 1860, the cotton's sales grew from around 3,000 bales to 12,000 bales and to 40,000 bales by 1874. This dramatic growth was a direct effect of the five railroad lines established by then in the city.

- 1875-1900- the cotton mills arrival turned the city into an industrial hub. It brought technology like the steam engine to support the demand.

R.M. and D.W. Oates established the Charlotte Cotton Mill in 1880. They employed around 70 people, mostly women and children, to clean, spin and weave the cotton brought from the surrounding fields.

Engineers like D.A. Tomkins designed plans for cotton mills and created new machinery to process cotton seed oil that was previously discarded, as there was no use for them. In 1893 he built Atherton Mill in South Boulevard. Women and children were common employees working in the mills to help keep up with the demand.

Edward Dilworth Latta was a descendent of Mecklenburg plantation owner James Latta on **Latta Plantation**. He began the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, called the "4Cs" in 1890. His vision brought the concept of suburbs to the city and helped them to prosper by the development of the electric trolley with the assistance of Thomas Edison. The first suburb was Dilworth.

- 1900-1920- During the Industrial Era the population grew to thirty four thousand people, a trifold growth for the city. Other suburbs appeared like Plaza Midwood and Myers Park. Washington Heights was the first 'colored' suburb created by Black American capitalist.  
New industries evolved from the mills like textile manufacturers and businesses that made cotton waste into useful items like padding. Other industries included casting iron and pipes; and a peanut roasting factory called Lance Packing Company. W.H. Belk and J.B. Ivey started the first department stores in the region that are still in the market today.

The tobacco industry also grew to be the leading exporter in the country.

Many banks originated around the 1900s as a result of the cotton, tobacco and manufacturing businesses that moved into the region. Charlotte National Bank and Union National Bank were the predecessors of Wachovia, First Union and NNCB banks which became well known towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

In 1904, the Southern Power Company provided electricity to the region which was created by James B. Duke, his brother Ben Duke with the Wylie Brothers and with the help of Engineer William States Lee. They were the pioneers to bring into existence the technology for the hydroelectric power. They took advantage of the slight hills alongside the Catawba River to build the dams that produce the power. Today, we called the business Duke Energy.

- 1920-1950- what changes did the city experience because of the Great Depression and World War II.

Ford Motor Company opened in 1925, an assembly line plant for their Model T' cars. All national film companies had distribution centers in Charlotte with transactions mounting to two million dollars annually. Victor Corporation also had a regional distribution center for its radios, phonographs and records. Then it established a recording center with renowned names like the Carter family, Luke Jordan and Bill Monroe who founded the Bluegrass Boys string band.

Governor Cameron Morrison initiated the "Good Road Program" which developed a structure of paved highways. These connectors aided to establish a trucking business that supplied goods to the southeastern of the United States.

Well known architects built ten and twenty story skyscrapers to line Tryon Street and other streets in downtown. The major department retailers, Belk and Ivey expanded or built bigger stores.

- 1950- present- Charlotte gets national recognition as the trucking and the banking industries grew in the region.

The building of the interstate highways, I-85 and I-77 promoted to establish a trucking distribution center. All these businesses strengthen the banking industry that is thriving in the city.

The first 'strictly stock' NASCAR car racing was held in Charlotte Speedway in 1949. This is not the Charlotte Motor Speedway that we know today. That is why many NASCAR racing teams have their headquarters in the area.

Lake Norman is a man-made body of fresh water that opened in 1964. It was created while building the Cowan’s Ford dam to bring hydroelectric power to the surrounding community.

### **Classroom Activities**

#### Activity One

To introduce this unit, the students will learn how Charlotte was nickname the Queen City and Hornets’ Nest.

They will create a KWL chart to compile ideas on what they already know and what they will like to learn throughout the study of this curriculum unit.

What I know	What I want to learn	What I learned from unit

After the KWL chart, the students will watch the video from Mr. Rod Potter, a brief history lesson for Charlotte, North Carolina at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhxIkTKGN2w>

#### Activity Two

A Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting how families lived back then with modern families.

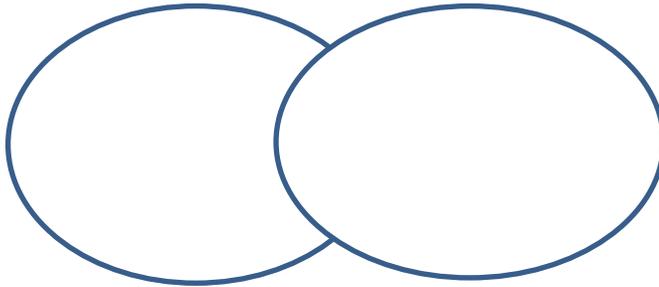
The students will visit the home of Hezekiah Alexander built in 1774. The stone house is a two-story structure that has a parlor, an office, a dining area and a bedroom downstairs. The house upstairs consists of 4 connecting bedrooms. The property has a separate kitchen, a springhouse and a barn. The springhouse is a two story building constructed over a natural spring. In the bottom floor is where the food was kept fresh and in the upper level, a single room is set-up as a trading post. Mr. Alexander lived there with his 10 children and some slaves.

In the classroom, the students will discuss the construction of the house, where and how they cook, and where they get their supplies. They will compare it to items that we use today. There will be turn & talk section to describe what the kids do in the farm and

the toys they played with during that time. His house was an outpost for trading during and after the Revolutionary War.

Families in 1770s

Families in 2010



### Activity Three

Watch a Discovery Education video about North Carolina Gold Rush featuring the Reed Gold Mine which was the first discovery of gold in America.

Link- <https://app.discoveryeducation.com/search?Ntt=north+carolina+gold+rush>

### Activity Four

Make a diorama showing the community's infrastructure around a railroad and a cotton mill. These communities were self-sufficient as anything you will need, you can find inside the community. These communities will have their own gardens and farm animals to provide food. General stores have items for all the basic needs. They will have iron and wood shops to provide transportation and furniture.

### Activity Five

Show historical photographs from [www.lewishinephotographs.com/](http://www.lewishinephotographs.com/) Lewis Hine was an American photographer and sociologist. Hine used his photographic talent to fight the social injustice of child labor. Many children worked long hours and risked their lives daily working the fields of farms and inside textile mills.

They will also watch a 'You Tube' video about the life of the children in the cotton mills.

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play?p=cotton+mills&vid=54cada6491c922307f32c84b7ac19296&l=2%3A41&turl=http%3A%2F%2Fts1.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3DVN.608039126166671304%26pid%3D15.1&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Ds\\_iJqFuJns&tit=Cotton+Mill+Girl%3A+A+Tribute+to+Hedy+West&c=29&sigr=11bna5kb3&sigt=1180t73v2&sigi=11rfjcl8&back=https%3A%2F%2Fsear](https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play?p=cotton+mills&vid=54cada6491c922307f32c84b7ac19296&l=2%3A41&turl=http%3A%2F%2Fts1.mm.bing.net%2Fth%3Fid%3DVN.608039126166671304%26pid%3D15.1&rurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Ds_iJqFuJns&tit=Cotton+Mill+Girl%3A+A+Tribute+to+Hedy+West&c=29&sigr=11bna5kb3&sigt=1180t73v2&sigi=11rfjcl8&back=https%3A%2F%2Fsear)

[ch.yahoo.com%2Fyhs%2Fsearch%3Fp%3Dvideo%2Bof%2Bcotton%2Bmills%26ei%3DUTF-8%26hsimp%3Dyhs-001%26hspart%3Dmozilla&sigb=131s2is1h&ct=p&age=1365177600&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=mozilla&tt=b](http://ch.yahoo.com%2Fyhs%2Fsearch%3Fp%3Dvideo%2Bof%2Bcotton%2Bmills%26ei%3DUTF-8%26hsimp%3Dyhs-001%26hspart%3Dmozilla&sigb=131s2is1h&ct=p&age=1365177600&fr2=p%3As%2Cv%3Av&hsimp=yhs-001&hspart=mozilla&tt=b)

The students will write an opinion piece about their agreement or disagreement to the children working in the cotton mills. They will support their opinion with evidence from the video, and the reading materials with the photographs.

#### Activity Six

Visit the McGuire Nuclear Station with hands-on activities that shows how Lake Norman was built. The students will make a poster with at least four changes that the opening of the lake brought to the surrounding community.

#### Activity Seven

Explain in a Writer's Notebook the following questions when the topics are taught during the curriculum unit.

*What changes occurred in the community during the North Carolina Gold Rush?*

*Explain how the railroads helped the growth of the cotton trade in Charlotte.*

*Why the Black workers were paid minimal wages while working in the crop's farms and the mills?*

*Why children were allowed to work in the field and in mills?*

*What changes in the communities that surround Lake Norman have you discover after visiting the McGuire Nuclear Station?*

#### Activity Eight

This activity will stress how cause and effect shaped the history of the Queen City. I will review the definitions of cause and effect that were learned during Language Arts class. As a class, we will come up with a list of important events and its effect in the city. A good example will be the discovery of gold and its effect in the growth and the economy of the region. Here is a sample of the table that can be done from the classroom discussion.

CAUSES	EFFECTS
Gold Rush	
Railroads	
Cotton and tobacco mills	
Mint of coins	
Suburbs	
Nascar	
Lake Norman	

### Activity Nine

Post across the school's Media Center a railroad-shaped timeline showing important figures and events in the history of Charlotte. Each pair of students will research pre-selected figures and events to add the information to each shaped piece. Here is a link to some templates about trains and cabooses: <http://galleryhip.com/train-caboose-template.html>

### Activity Ten

For the culmination of the curriculum unit, we will visit the Levine Museum of the New South to look first hand at the changes that our city had experience from cotton mills to skyscrapers. The museum permanent exhibit is called *Cotton Fields to Skyscrapers: Reinventing Charlotte and the Carolina Piedmont in the New South*. The exhibition houses over a thousand artifacts, images, video clips, music and oral stories that show the changes that took place in the region since the Civil War. It portraits the economic transformation from small farms to the textile factories, and the establishment of a banking center.

### Writing Reflection

Which period of history would you like to live in and why?

Choices: during the gold rush, working in a plantation, building of the railroads, working in a cotton mill, making bank transactions, driving racing cars or making hydroelectric power at a dam.

Students will discuss in class what they wrote and brainstorm ideas with their peers of some pros and cons for each period selected.

**List of Materials for that will be use in the classroom:**

- Projection system and a document camera that will facilitate a SmartBoard presentation.
- Books and photographs for each period discussed in the unit.
- A railroad- shaped timeline showing important figures and events in the history of Charlotte.
- IPad and Chromebooks to research topics of interest.
- Student Writer's Notebooks

**Appendix 1: Implementing Common Core Standards**

This curriculum unit will explain Social Studies and World Languages standards:

3.H.1.1 Explain key historical events that occurred in the local community and regions over time.

3.H.1.2 Analyze the impact of contributions made by diverse historical figures in local communities and regions over time.

3.H.1.3 Exemplify the ideas that were significant in the development of local communities and regions.

3.H.2.1 Explain change over time through historical narratives. (Events, people and places).

3.H.2.2 Explain how multiple perspectives are portrayed through historical narratives.

3.C.1.3 Use non-fiction texts to explore how cultures borrow and share from each other (foods, languages, rules, traditions and behaviors).

3.E.1.2 Explain how locations of regions and natural resources influence economic development (industries developed around natural resources, rivers and coastal towns).

## **Appendix 2: Important Figures in the History of Charlotte**

1. Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg- Strelitz: she was the wife of the king of England George III which united England and Ireland under the title of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. After their marriage they moved to Buckingham House which King George III bought for his family.
2. William Tryon- Colonial Governor of North Carolina appointed by British Government in 1764.
3. Thomas Polk- He was a military commander and civic leader in the county. He moved to this area with his parents and siblings from Pennsylvania in the 1750s. He married Susannah Spratt, another family who had relocated here. He led the meeting that adopted the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. He was named Colonel of the Fourth North Carolina Regiment during the Revolutionary War.
4. Hezekiah Alexander- resident of Mecklenburg. He was appointed County Magistrate by Governor William Tryon. Signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. Founder and Trustee of Queen's College.
5. D.A. Tomkins- He was an engineer, manufacturer, publisher and a civic leader for Charlotte and the south region. He was an agent for Westinghouse Machine Company that was sent to this town to sell steam engine machinery. He became an entrepreneur when he saw the possibility for the industrialization of the area.
6. Edward Dilworth Latta- he is responsible for the first suburb called Dilworth in Charlotte. He also developed the electric trolley that promoted the suburbs to grow.
7. Philip L. Lance- he created Lance Packing Company after he sold roasted peanuts in the streets of downtown. He also started making peanut butter to spread in crackers which were very popular with the soldiers of World War I.

8. James B. Duke- His family' business was in the marketing of cigarettes. He established a branch in New York City; and within five years it was supplying half of the total production in the United States. Then, he joined his brother Ben to find ways to produce electricity to boost their textile industry. He founded with his brother the Duke Endowment Fund to support charities around the region in honor to their father Washington Duke. Duke University is supported through this foundation.

## **Resources**

### ***For Teachers***

Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. *The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story*. January 01, 2002. [www.cmstory.org/history/timeline](http://www.cmstory.org/history/timeline) (accessed October 01, 2013)  
This website provides a vast amount of Charlotte history presented in reader-friendly timeline format with many time specific photos.

State Board of Education. *North Carolina Essential Standards Third Grade Social Studies*. December 2, 2010. [www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/social-studies/3-5.pdf](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/social-studies/3-5.pdf) (accessed September 28, 2013). This is the official website for the State of North Carolina Department of Public Education and defines the Common Core and Essential Standards objectives.

### ***Reading List for Students***

*Charlotte, North Carolina: A Brief History* by Mary Kratt 2009. This book outlines Charlotte's rich heritage and the people who made the Queen City what it is today.

*Golden Promise in the Piedmont: The Story of John Reed's Mine* by Dr. Richard F. Knapp 1999.

### ***Reading List for Teachers***

Cotton Mills, <http://www.learnnc.org/search?phrase=cotton+mills>. This LearnNC website provides many links to related topics and further reading about the cotton mill communities and their infrastructure.

The Civil War in Charlotte, <http://www.cmstory.org/content/1861-1865-us-civil-war-era>. This website tells the Charlotte- Mecklenburg story on how the city was a mid-point for the Union and the Confederate forces. It gives the details how the North Carolina Declaration of Independence was drafted asking for freedom from the U.S. government.

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