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"A New Town Will Appear on Charleston Neck": North Charleston and the Creation of the New South Garden City.

Dean Thrift Sinclair

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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"A NEW TOWN WILL APPEAR ON CHARLESTON NECK":
NORTH CHARLESTON AND THE CREATION
OF THE NEW SOUTH GARDEN CITY

VOLUME I

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by
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December 2001
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Abstract

In 1912, five residents of Charleston, South Carolina purchased 5,000 acres of land in the area called “the Neck,” a marshy and pestilential portion of the peninsula connecting the City of Charleston with the balance of South Carolina. On this property these leaders, tied to the progressive spirit sweeping America and the effort to create the New South, planned a new city called North Charleston. The 1,000-acre city was to be a complete community, with industrial, commercial, and residential activities to serve a population of 30,000 residents. An adjacent 4,000-acre tract was planned as an agricultural development to revitalize farming in the South Carolina lowcountry. It was hoped that the huge development would propel the Charleston economy into the forefront of the New South and reestablish the city’s prominence in the North American system of cities.

This work traces the emergence of city planning in North America and particularly in the South during the Progressive Era. Two key movements, the City Beautiful and the Garden City, which both complemented and contradicted each other, come together in the planning of North Charleston as well as other new cities in the American South between 1912 and 1930. The goal was to bind together the South’s traditional agrarian economy with the growing industrial economy of the early twentieth century by creating a new urban form, the New South Garden City. Subsequent planned cities that built on the tradition first expressed in North Charleston included Kingsport, Tennessee, Farm City, North Carolina, Clewiston, Florida, and Chicopee, Georgia.
Historians of urban planning and urban geographers have generally neglected planning in the South during this period. Clearly, however, there was considerable activity in the creation of new urban places in the South. In creating the New South Garden City, its visionaries drew on an ideology of progress and an ideology of agrarianism, a contradiction that contributed to the halting growth of these new urban places. Though these cities did not develop as planned, the New South Garden City nevertheless represents an important contribution to the dynamic urban geography of North America.
Chapter 1
“A Community in Itself”

On September 7, 1912, the Charleston News and Courier reported, beneath the stirring headline “Huge Enterprise for City,” on the chartering of three companies to develop a new industrial city on a 5,000-acre tract of land ten miles north of Charleston. The report stated that “The project is the development of a large tract of land... into what is expected to be a community in itself, with numerous residences, stores, and manufacturing plants.”\(^1\) In addition, the plan included several thousand acres that were intended for small farms of around five to ten acres, drawing together the industrial and agricultural sectors of the lowcountry economy. The newspaper went on to identify several “local capitalists,” all prominent citizens of Charleston, who were responsible for the venture and stressed that “practically all of the capital has been made up locally and the project will be altogether local.”\(^2\) In an era marked by tremendous progressive social experimentation, these “local capitalists” embarked on one of the most visionary and ambitious city building projects ever undertaken in the United States, one that would forever alter the geographic fabric of Charleston and provide a model for other new cities of the New South.

Charleston in 1912 was a city brimming with hope. The impending opening of the Panama Canal was seen as a rare opportunity for Charleston, which billed itself as “the plumb line port to the Panama Canal.”\(^3\) to recapture its former role as an important South Atlantic port of trade. Imports and exports through the port of Charleston, after several years of relative stagnation, had begun to surge and railroad freight rate problems that had plagued the city’s commercial life for decades had begun to ease. In
addition, a short lived phosphate boom in the 1880s had brought great wealth to many of the city’s residents and whetted the appetite of the city’s boosters for new economic opportunities. By 1912, Charleston was on the verge of a cultural and economic renaissance. The ambitious plans for North Charleston were emblematic of that surging hope, as prominent local leaders put into motion a plan that they believed would push Charleston into the vanguard of the booming “New South,” a regional descriptor that invokes that loose set of ideas associated with progress and economic revitalization in the American South in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Though Charleston is not generally considered to be in the forefront of Progressive Era thought during the first decades of the 1900s, its political and economic leadership during this period was clearly influenced by the progressive spirit (Figure 1.1). Robert Goodwyn Rhett, the city’s mayor between 1904 and 1912, was closely linked to the progressive movement in the Democratic Party, instituting numerous reforms, programs, and projects to improve the city. It was Rhett’s vision of a new industrial and agricultural city in Charleston’s “Neck,” the marshy lowlands to the north of the peninsular city, which led to the planning of North Charleston (Figure 1.2). Rhett and the other founders of North Charleston looked at the new city not only as a real estate venture but also an opportunity to reshape the economic and social landscape of the South Carolina lowcountry by developing Charleston’s hinterland.

The plan for the development of North Charleston incorporated many of the elements of progressive planning then emerging in Europe and North America in the first decades of the twentieth century. The nascent planning movement was awash in ideas, exemplified by Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City and Charles Mulford Robinson’s
City Beautiful. The influence of these movements, which inspired countless planners and visionaries on both sides of the Atlantic, are evident in the ambitious plans for the new city on Charleston's Neck.

Figure 1.1
South Carolina

Though the plan for North Charleston reflected many of the elements of progressive town planning, it was not conceived as a utopian experiment by starry-eyed dreamers. The new city was a business venture intended to turn a handsome profit. It was hoped that the ambitious plan would result in the transformation of the South Carolina lowcountry into a manufacturing center, increase the area's population by attracting new workers to its factories and farms, and push Charleston back into the
Figure 1.2
Charleston and Charleston's Neck
foreground of Atlantic coastal port cities. That North Charleston did not achieve all of these goals is not a failure of vision, but instead represents the result of the general economic conditions that plagued the American South during the early 1900s. The development of the planned “community in itself” did not match the expectations put forward in the breathless announcements of 1912, yet the city of North Charleston still stands as an innovative exercise in city planning in the early years of the twentieth century.

The North Charleston development was clearly influenced by Howard’s Garden City concept. First put forward by Howard in a small book entitled *Tomorrow a Better World* in 1898, later republished as *Garden Cities of To-morrow*, these planned cities were to incorporate industrial and agricultural activities in a fully designed urban area which included retail zones, parks, landscaped boulevards, and a host of amenities.4 In most reconstructions of the emergence of planning in the United States, it has generally been accepted that the Garden City concept had relatively little impact on urban planning in the United States until the 1920s, with the establishment of “America’s first Garden City” at Radburn, New Jersey. North Charleston, however, as well as several other new cities in the South planned in the 1910s and early 1920s, incorporated many aspects of Howard’s vision of a new urban future, suggesting that the Garden City idea found a receptive audience in the progressive capitalists of the New South. The influence of Howard’s vision on the American South has gone largely unremarked in planning historiography or in urban historical geography. But with ambitious planned cities like North Charleston that sought to integrate the South’s traditional agrarian economy with the new industrial economy, the factory with the field, New South
boosters were clearly engaged in designing a new urban future in the early years of the 1900s based on principles articulated by Ebenezer Howard. This new urban form, then looked to an industrial future while maintaining a strong link with the South’s agrarian past.

The project embarked upon by North Charleston’s developers was a difficult one. The north area, or “the Neck” as it was called locally, was indelibly linked with the pestilential marshes that had slowed Charleston’s northward expansion. The common perception among local residents was that no white person could live on the Neck due to the presence of malaria and other deadly diseases. Despite extensive drainage projects in the first years of the 1900s, the Neck had largely been left to African Americans who farmed small to medium sized holdings or worked in the phosphate pits and the lumber yards of the north area. Still, the north area appeared to many of Charleston’s progressive capitalists as the city’s natural hinterland, ripe for industrial development.

To see their plans to fruition, the developers engaged the first landscape architecture firm to operate from the South, the P.J. Berckmans Company of Augusta, Georgia. This company, which had ties to the prestigious Fruitlands Nursery of Augusta, had designed several mill villages and been involved in other projects, but had never undertaken a project of this scale. The firm had recently hired William Bell Marquis, a young, Harvard-trained landscape architect, to oversee its landscape planning operation. The plans that Marquis created for the new city are a wonderful example of Progressive Era planning at the beginning of the century. The Marquis’ plan incorporated many of the most progressive ideas of the time, including an

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extensive system of parks and schools, a large plaza which was to be the center of public life in the new city, industrial sites situated along rail lines surrounding the new city, and residential tracts for a population numbering nearly 30,000. The plan clearly drew on the principles of Howard’s Garden City as well as the aesthetic elements associated with Robinson’s City Beautiful movement. Though the plan created by Marquis for North Charleston easily matched the dreams of its promoters, it would take forty years for much of the plant to be realized, as the tides of economic distress swept over the grand plans for the new city in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the following pages the development of North Charleston will be examined from its inception in 1912 to 1950, when the basic lines of development were well established and the city was approaching build-out. There are three key issues to be addressed in this study. First, how did the plan for North Charleston reflect as well as advance the progress of city planning in the early years of the twentieth century? Second, how did the new city of North Charleston actually develop over time, and what factors spurred or hindered its development? And finally, was the planning and creation of North Charleston a unique, isolated occurrence or was it part of a larger effort in the South to create new urban places which sought to bind together the agricultural and industrial sectors of the region?

To properly address these questions, first the background of the development of planning in the United States must be addressed. Though the beginning of “planning” in North America is problematic at best, certain key figures in the emergence of the profession of planning in the 1800s can be identified, in particular Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted. Given the influence of these figures, the
institutionalization and professionalization of planning as influenced by the ideas of visionaries like Edward Bellamy and Peter Kropotkin as well as Howard and Robinson, can be examined. The ideas of these figures changed the way the city was imagined, and opened the door to the creation of the professional planner.

Once the background of the planning profession is established, the planning of new towns, one of its major activities, can be examined. As with planning itself, the dating of the first planned city in North America is difficult to define and not wholly productive, but planned cities in the industrial age are relatively easy to examine. Planned cities which influenced the development of the profession of planning, such as Vandergrift, Pullman, and Gary, also had a profound impact on the perception of the city by society at large. In the New South, there were planned cities as well which had an impact on efforts by Southern boosters to bring economic growth and renewed vitality to the relatively backward region. These cities, including the Alabama cities of Anniston and Fairfield, served as models for the possibilities of building new cities in the New South. As plans for new cities emerged in the 1910s and 1920s, the influence of Howard’s Garden City as a solution to the urban and rural ills of America will be examined.

Once the principles upon which planning in the United States during the Progressive Era have been established, the following pages will examine the application of these principles to the planned city of North Charleston. First, an understanding of the historical and geographical development of Charleston’s social and economic structures will be established, and then the plan for the new city on Charleston’s Neck will be placed within that social and economic milieu. The planning process of North
Charleston will be examined, as will the plan itself, in an effort to tease out influences and characteristics that might be evident in other planning efforts in the New South.

With the plan established, the effort to promote and build the new city will then be examined. The development of North Charleston between 1915 and 1950 will be traced, and its successes and failures documented. Indeed, in many ways the evolution of North Charleston can be characterized as a failure, as the economic downturn that afflicted South Carolina in the 1920s swept over the balance of the country in the 1930s and control of the development of North Charleston slipped from the hands of local progressive capitalists to northern investors.

With the evolution of North Charleston firmly established, its influence in the South can be traced in the creation of a new urban form which appears in several locations, the New South Garden City. The key characteristics of this new urban form, including size, population, form, function, and control, can be seen in the plans for other new cities in the South as urban progressives sought to revitalize the region’s economy. By examining the plans for new cities that emerged after 1912 and that incorporated many of the aspects of the North Charleston model, including Kingsport, Tennessee, Farm City, North Carolina, Clewiston, Florida, and Chicopee, Georgia, it will be established that with the creation of the New South Garden City, a unique moment in urban planning history and in the creation of the North American landscape occurred in the American South in the first decades of the twentieth century (Figure 1.3).

In 1912, the developers of North Charleston fully expected that “a new city will appear on Charleston Neck.” It was to be a “community in itself,” a fully functioning urban center. They envisioned factory workers and yeoman farmers living in a bustling.
harmonious community that would propel the South Carolina lowcountry into the modern age. The community that was envisioned did not appear, but that does not detract from the boldness of the plan or its importance in understanding the development of urban planning during the previous century. Moreover, tracing the development of North Charleston through the first half of the 1900s and positioning it in the context of contemporaneous planned communities in the New South will shed new light on the urban historical geography of America.

End Notes

1 News and Courier, September 7, 1912.

2 Ibid.

3 Charleston Chamber of Commerce. Facts Worth Knowing About Charleston. 1915.

Chapter 2

The Emergence of City Planning

It is difficult to determine a beginning date of city planning in North America. Clearly there were large multifunctional urban centers in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans in 1492, including Tenochtitlan, Cuzco, and Cahokia. After contact with the European world, the plantation of new cities expanded dramatically. For instance, the Spanish dotted the landscape with hundreds of cities and towns based on the famous “Law of the Indies” which mandated an urban form drawn from the writings of the Roman planner Vitruvius. In North America, most early settlements began with some sort of plan, and several cities, such as Philadelphia and Savannah, represent monumental efforts at detailed planning of the urban environment, drawing on the models of planning then emerging in Europe.

Thus to pin a date on the emergence of planning in North America is problematic, and for our purposes not a particularly useful exercise. What is useful for this discussion is to establish the emergence of town and city planning as a profession, and to draw out and then pull together the early strands of thought that would dominate the profession of planning as it emerged in the first decades of the twentieth century. This contextualization of planning in the streams of thought then coursing through the Atlantic basin, as characterized by Rodgers and others is intended to explicate the aesthetic and intellectual foundation of planning in two major movements: the Garden City Movement and the City Beautiful Movement. As these strands of thought are drawn out and pulled together, using extensive quotations from the period as well as from later chroniclers, it becomes clear that the emergence of planning is closely tied to
the reform spirit of the Progressive Era, which was influenced by both the Garden City and City Beautiful Movements as exemplified in the planning of new industrial suburbs and cities. This reform spirit will also become drawn into the spirit of the New South, which sought to remake the region as a fully functioning urban industrialized and agriculturally progressive player in the national economy. New industrial cities for the New South, which sought to draw together the industrial and the agricultural sectors of the Southern economy, will be one experiment employed to spur economic growth. It will thus be argued that the American South was an early source of bold experimentation in city planning, with ambitious plans closely reflecting the entwined ideals of the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements.

The Examined City

By all accounts, the city is one of the most studied of human achievements. Library shelves groan under the weight of volumes dedicated to evolution of the city, such as Mumford’s classic text *The City in History*, Morris’ *History of Urban Form*, Sjoberg’s *The Preindustrial City*, Hall’s *Cities in Civilization*, Wheatley’s *The Pivot of the Four Quarters*, Zucker’s *Town and Square*, Sennett’s *Flesh and Stone*, and Vance’s *The Continuing City*, to name just a handful. These works provide remarkable insight into the evolution of man’s chosen home, the city. Each has a somewhat different take on the processes at work in city building as well as the cultural dynamic of the city, and the sheer volume of words quickly becomes overwhelming.

In addition to general studies on the city, there are numerous studies on its changing morphology, in particular the horizontal spread of the city through suburbanization. The scale of these studies tends to be more manageable, and most
focus on North America, since this continent grasped the suburban form much earlier and in many ways more firmly than elsewhere. Studies of suburbanization include Kenneth Jackson’s excellent *Crabgrass Frontier*, Warner’s classic *Streetcar Suburbs*, Harris’ account of the changing morphology of Toronto in *Unplanned Suburbs*, and Stilgoe’s groundbreaking efforts to link suburbanization with deeper cultural shifts which accompanied the movement to the “middle landscape” in *Borderlands* and *Metropolitan Corridor*.

Planning is closely linked to the changing morphology of the city, as richly documented in numerous accounts. Chief among these is Scott’s *American City Planning Since 1890*, a solid chronological account of the development of planning in the United States, and Newton’s *Design on the Land*, a wonderful history of the evolution of landscape architecture, a discipline that forms the bedrock of modern planning. A major work that traces the emergence of city and town planning to the utopian thinkers of the early 1800s is Benevelo’s *The Origins of Modern Town Planning*. Krueckeberg has also made important contributions to the history of planning in his works *Introduction to Planning History in the United States*, a readable account of the development of planning in this country, and *The American Planner*, which includes biographical sketches of numerous important figures in planning. Compendiums such as Sies and Silver’s *Planning the Twentieth-Century American City* also provide considerable insight into the development of planning. A related work on the evolution of the city in North America as well as on the development of planning is Reps’ classic *The Making of Urban America*.  

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There are, however, numerous works that take a more critical view of the evolution and the work of planners in society. Among these works that take a less positive view of the development of planning as a process as well as a profession are Jacob’s groundbreaking work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, which takes a scathing view of the efforts of planners and others to reshape the city, and Hall’s *Cities of Tomorrow*, a more sympathetic yet challenging reconstruction of the history of city planning. In addition, Relph, in his work *The Modern Urban Landscape*, takes a somewhat contrary position towards planning, examining the development of the urban landscape in light of the professional planner’s general disregard for that landscape despite their close association with the city.

Planning has a rich history in North America. The emergence of modern planning in North America, however, can be dated to the 1800s. and linked to several leading figures. These individuals include Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted. Downing, who died young at the age of 37 in 1852, lay the foundation for an American landscape aesthetic as editor of the monthly *Horticulturist* and in works such as *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. Downing’s work would be further developed by Olmsted, arguably the first landscape architect in North America. The characteristics of modern planning heralded by Downing and Olmsted can be summarized as the alteration of the environment through a conscious design or redesign of an urban landscape to achieve a predetermined purpose. As the cities of North America exploded in the mid- to late 1800s, under the twin assaults of immigration and industrialization, many began looking for a new way
of ordering urban life. Olmsted's efforts at making the built environment harmonious with the natural stand as watershed events in the emergence of planning in America.

Frederick Law Olmsted and Modern Planning

Frederick Law Olmsted's life and career have been well documented. Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1822, Olmsted did not attend college as his family's standing in the community would have dictated, but instead apprenticed himself to a land surveyor at an early age. By 18, he had moved on from surveying and was living in New York City, working at various occupations, including as a clerk for a dry goods importer. Later he would spend time at sea, attempt life as a farmer, and work as a journalist and a publisher. His travels as a journalist brought him a measure of renown, and from this experience would come several books, including A Journey in the Slave States, with Remarks on Their Economy in 1855.4

In 1857, Olmsted's career took an eventful turn with the decision by New York's Board of Commissioners of the Central Park to hire him as its superintendent. A large Central Park had been proposed several years earlier by A. J. Downing, but the effort had become mired in New York politics. As superintendent, Olmsted was responsible for managing the work crews on the site that had been acquired by the Board. There was, however, no agreed upon plan for the new park. For that, a competition was held in 1858. Olmsted had been approached by Calvert Vaux, a native of England who had designed residential estates in the Hudson Valley and elsewhere with Downing, to work on a plan for the park. The two men then began working on the plan for the 800-acre site in the evenings. "Greensward," the plan submitted by Olmsted and Vaux, was the plan chosen by the Commission.5

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The design of Central Park represents a revolutionary moment in the planning of urban space, with its winding paths, surprising vistas, large open areas, and separation of pedestrian movement in the park from vehicular traffic, placed in sunken roadways. As Olmsted wrote: “The landscape character of a park, or of any ground to which that term is applied with strict propriety, is that of an idealized broad stretch of pasture, offering in its fair, sloping surfaces, dressed with fine, close herbage, its ready alternatives of shade with sunny spaces, and its still waters of easy approach, attractive promises in every direction, and, consequently, invitations to movement on all sides, go through it where one may.”6 The plan for the park remade the site into a sylvan setting of great beauty which would well serve the growing metropolis. The curving paths and expansive open spaces of Central Park provided welcome relief from the rigid gridiron of the island of Manhattan.

Central Park became a model for urban recreational space throughout America, and after the Civil War the firm of Olmsted, Vaux and Company, Landscape Architects—the first official use of the professional designation of landscape architect—was in tremendous demand.7 Many major cities desired their own Central Park, as city boosters realized that growth required amenities that had previously been ignored. Cities such as Boston, Washington, and San Francisco all looked to Olmsted to design, or in some cases redesign, urban park spaces.

Olmsted’s career was multifaceted. His planning work included parks, suburbs, new industrial towns, expositions, college campuses, and even cemeteries. Olmsted, writes Rybczynski, “was one of the first people to recognize the necessity for planning in a large industrial country—whether in peace or war.”8 Two of his projects, however,
seem particularly pertinent to the planning movement which emerged in the New South as exemplified by North Charleston: Riverside and the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893.

**Riverside**

What Central Park did for urban public space, Riverside, a planned suburb outside of Chicago, accomplished for suburban design. The planning for Riverside began in 1868 when a group of private investors contacted Olmsted and Vaux with regards to a site nine miles from downtown Chicago. Olmsted was keenly aware that city life in America was changing, and in looking at Riverside envisioned a new urban future, and in the Preliminary Report for Riverside stated:

> It thus becomes evident that the present outward tendency of town populations is not so much an ebb as a higher rise of the same flood, the end of which must be, not a sacrifice of urban conveniences, but their combination with the special charms and substantial advantages of rural conditions of life. Hence a series of neighborhoods of a peculiar character is already growing up in close relation with all large towns, and though many of these are as yet little better than rude over-dressed villages, or fragmentary half-made towns, it can hardly be questions that, already, there are to be found among them the most attractive, the most refined and the most soundly wholesome forms of domestic life, and the best application of the arts of civilization to which mankind has yet attained. . . . It would appear then. . . that no great town can long exist without great suburbs.⁹

The plan for Riverside is marked by pleasant, curving streets, a town center with small shops and community buildings, and residential areas with large lots. The plan represents a dramatic improvement over other suburban plans. As Newton states:

> The 1869 General Plan for Riverside. . . shows how well the reasoning of the preliminary report was applied. The curves have a controlled sweep and continuity of their own, unlike any precedent. On the ground the rural effect is heightened by the careful avoidance of curbs. . . and the subtle placement of the roads in slight depressions, flat-sloped so as to become almost invisible except when directly ahead of the traveler. . . . At key points throughout, as well as in
the Long Common and along the river, there are open spaces that contribute an even greater sense of breadth and calm.\textsuperscript{10}

Thus, the understanding of the suburban environment, which would over the course of the next 100 years become the predominate mode of urban spatial construction, was altered with the planning for Riverside. The bar was set higher with this plan, and the possibilities of life outside the city reconstituted. As Olmsted wrote:

There are two aspects of suburban habitation that need to be considered to ensure success; first, that of the domiciliation of men by families, each family being well provided for in regard to its domestic indoor and outdoor private life; second, that of the harmonious association and co-operation of men in a community, and the intimate relationship and constant intercourse, and interdependence between families. Each has its charm, and the charm of both should be aided and acknowledged by all means in the general plan of every suburb.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{The World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893}

As one of a series of expositions held during the nineteenth century, which included the Paris Exposition of 1889, famed for the construction of the Eiffel Tower, the World’s Columbian Exposition stands as a major event in planning history and in Olmsted’s long and distinguished career. In 1890 the United States Congress awarded the boosters of Chicago the privilege of hosting the exposition commemorating the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus’ voyage to the New World, edging out St. Louis, Washington, and New York.\textsuperscript{12} The board responsible for the Exposition called in Olmsted to consult on the site location, and Olmsted recommended and the board approved a 600-acre site south of Chicago’s downtown area. Olmsted was familiar with the site, having planned it in the early 1880s as part of a park system for the city that was never constructed.

Olmsted’s role in the planning of what would become known as the “White City” was extensive. As Rybczynski states:
The underlying concept originated with Olmsted and [associate] Codman. The major natural landscape feature of the fair would be water, not only Lake Michigan but also a system of basins, canals, and a lagoon. An existing stand of small oaks dictated the location of a large island in the center of the lagoon. The excavated earth would be used to create raised terraces on which the buildings would be constructed. In contrast to the naturalistic lagoon, the terraces would have hard edges and would surround a formal basin.13

With its grand avenues, twinkling electric lights, and brilliant white buildings in a style of monumental classical architecture, the Chicago Fair opened on May 1, 1893 and closed in October of the same year after attracting an astounding 21 and a half million visitors.14 The White City presented to its visitors a new vision of the city, far removed from the cramped streets and teeming tenements of the chaotic cities of 1890s America. What they saw was a "temporary wonderland of grand perspectives and cross axes, this incredible transformation of swamps and sandbars into shimmering lagoons and monumental palaces..."15 As Scott notes: "Plaster fantasy that it was, the World’s Columbian Exposition touched the deep longing of a nation suffering from a loss of continuity with history for visual assurance of maturity and success."16 The White City did not end with its closure, however, and touched nearly every corner of America, as business leaders and others felt the need to emulate the grandeur of the Exposition. As Scott notes: "The financial mind had always had a penchant for structures of classical stability, and in the colonnades and pediments of the White City it perceived the enduring soundness of the nation. The whole regal scene was, indeed, a prophecy, a forecast of monumental city halls, public libraries, museums, union stations, banks, and academic halls to be built in the next twenty or thirty years. As clearly as a royal edict, the fair proclaimed the aesthetic principles that would govern the design of civic
centers, malls, boulevards, university and college campuses, waterfronts, and other expositions for two decades or more."

The importance of the Exposition for the growing urban consciousness of America, however, ran even deeper, reshaping the perception of all who visited or were aware of the fair towards the possibilities of urban space. Along with its role as an exemplar of collaboration between various professions, including artists, architects, and landscape architects, "... the second positive point about the Columbian exposition, and the best known, was the unprecedented awakening of public interest in civic design." Newton notes that the degree of excitement about the Great White City, as it was often called, far exceeded anything its creators had hoped for. The use of electric lights, then still a novelty, to outline some of the buildings at night surely contributed to the general sense of enchantment. After all, the country had never seen anything like it before, and to most visitors the Fair was like a dream of unimaginable opulence. Far and wide a vibrant new interest was aroused in what design could do for America’s towns and cities.

Frederick Law Olmsted died in 1903 after a tortured eight year battle with senility. In his last years Olmsted had hoped to expand his operations in the South, and some of the projects on which he labored in his last productive years included the Druid Hills residential suburb outside Atlanta, the Cotton Exposition of Atlanta on the site of present day Piedmont Park, and Biltmore Estate. As he wrote to his stepson John, who was managing most of the firm’s affairs, “Future business in park designing will be in the south...” With regards to the Cotton Exposition in the New South capital of Atlanta, Roper states: “Olmsted met the promoters of the Cotton Exposition and inspected the proposed site. It was small, covering less than two hundred acres, and from the landscape point of view, unpromising... Olmsted, nevertheless, was eager to
take the work, both to demonstrate that old sectional rancor’s were losing their potency and because it was ‘very desirable to make the firm favorably known at the South and “extend its connection” as the merchants say.”'21

With Olmsted’s incapacitation in 1895, management of the leading landscape architecture firm in North America fell to his nephew John Charles Olmsted and his son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. These men would bring the Olmsted name and legacy into the next century of landscape architecture and planning, though the overarching vision that Olmsted, Sr. brought to the possibilities of landscape which so shaped late nineteenth century America was lacking. Nevertheless, at his death the firm was well positioned for the future and the professions of planning and landscape architecture were on their way to increased prominence which would come with the dawning of the Progressive Era.

The Garden City and the City Beautiful

The period in which Olmsted worked, and in which the Garden City and the City Beautiful were born, has been characterized in many ways and in a variety of studies. Wiebe, in his classic work *The Search for Order*, characterizes the period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s as one in which “publicists were savoring the word ‘nation’ in this sense of a continent conquered and tamed. It was a term that above all connoted growth and development and enterprise.”22 Wiebe adds that “The talk had such a breathless quality: so much so fast, with so much still coming. An age never lent itself more readily to sweeping, uniform description: nationalization, industrialization, mechanization, urbanization.”23 Wiebe characterizes this age as a “search for order” in an America without a core. According to Wiebe, America in the late 1800s “lacked
those centers of authority and information which might have given order to such swift changes. American institutions were still oriented toward a community life where family and church, education and press, professions and government, all largely found their meaning by the way they fit one with another. . . .”24 Wiebe asserts that these institutions no longer fit together, as Americans “tried . . . to impose the known upon the unknown, to master an impersonal world through the customs of a personal society”25 which no longer existed.

The Progressive Era in national life is generally framed by the ascension of Theodore Roosevelt to the Presidency in 1901 and the return of conservative Republican rule in the election of Warren G. Harding in 1920, with the high point of Progressive reform coming with the election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912. The Progressive Era is marked by a strong spirit of reform that was sweeping over the nations of the North Atlantic. “Progressivism,” Tindall and Shie write, “was a reform movement so varied and comprehensive it almost defies definition. The progressives saw themselves as engaged in a crusade against the abuses of urban political bosses and corporate robber barons.”26

During the Progressive Era there were two essential streams of thought in the planning of urban spaces: the Garden City movement, which had its origins in English soil, and the City Beautiful Movement, which originated in North America. The Garden City movement had by far the broadest vision, seeking nothing less than the reshaping of urban life. The City Beautiful Movement had a much more modest agenda, and looked upon the improvement of the aesthetic environment as key to improving the human spirit of city dwellers. The Garden City and the City Beautiful
share much in their approach to the environmental aesthetic of the city. Both of these streams of thought can be seen in the planning of new towns in the New South, as exemplified by the plan for North Charleston.

The Garden City

Though the Garden City movement is closely associated with Ebenezer Howard, the ideals of the Garden City had deep roots in the English Town planning tradition of the mid to late 1800s (Figure 2.1). Howard’s major contribution was in taking this tradition and formalizing it into a new urban space which sought to draw together the advantages of the country and that of the city, while placing cities into a larger regional context. In addition, Howard put forward a radical rethinking of the role of private property in the development of the city. Howard’s influence, then, can be seen both in terms of the spatial layout of the city as well as in modern regional planning. Though his vision of a communally owned city has not come to pass, his influence on thinking with regards to land use profits and the responsibility of the property owner can be traced to modern zoning and land use regulations.

Born in London in 1850, Ebenezer Howard had an undistinguished early career. As his first biographer noted: “It is reasonable to ask how a man with Howard’s qualities and start in life came to have the undoubted influence he wielded with all sorts of people.” He was trained as a stenographer and after working in England for several years in this capacity came to America in 1871 to try his hand at farming in the Midwest. After an unsuccessful season in Nebraska, Howard relocated to the booming city of Chicago in 1872.
Howard remained in Chicago for four years, working as a stenographer. Undoubtedly, living in the rapidly growing city was very important to the development of Howard's urban vision. As Osborn notes: "It is a pity that only brief flashes of light on Howard's life in Chicago are available, because it is likely that the pattern of his lifelong interests was set during those four years... The faith in material progress, science and invention, and their wonderful promise for the future... he found there in full bloom."28

Howard returned to England in 1876, finding employment as a stenographer in London and getting married. Like Chicago, London was booming as migrants from the countryside flocked to the factories of the city. In the 1880s, the London metropolitan
area included between four and five million people, with more arriving daily. These crowded streets stood in stark contrast to several new industrial towns that had been built by several enlightened entrepreneurs. These experiments in new industrial communities would have been well known to Howard, appealing to his growing conviction of a new urban future. The traces of the Garden City as put forward by Howard can be seen in these towns.

England’s industrialization in the early nineteenth century meant that the factory system and all of its attendant problems emerged early in the British Isles. One of the key problems as seen by early industrialists was the issue of labor, particularly in terms of worker quality and labor force stability. Workers living in the tenements of England’s burgeoning cities were seen as a hindrance to the efficient production so desired by the new captains of industry. To meet this challenge, several English industrials began establishing factories distant from the crowded, debilitating cities where they could fashion a new environment. Saltaire, Port Sunlight, and Bournville are three prominent examples of these new planned urban industrial places.

Saltaire, the creation of the textile magnate Sir Titus Salt, was planned and constructed between 1850 and 1863 in the midlands region near Leeds. Worker housing was well designed, consisting of two and three story row housing that bore and architectural unity that gave the new industrial town a cohesive appearance. Designed for around 5,000 workers, the town included such amenities as green spaces, schools, and an Institute which included adult education and recreation opportunities, houses for the poor and the elderly, and an infirmary. The orderly streets and neo-Renaissance architecture, which some commentators found boring, represented unity and order for
the workers in Salt’s textile mills. As Cresse writes: “There can be no denial of the pedantry of Saltaire, but it may not be so foreign and artificial... as it has been described. It was the product of an era... of simple initiative and direct thought...”31

Port Sunlight was a town created by Lord Leverhulme of the Lever soap fortune. Built in 1888 near Liverpool in the Midlands, the new town was a well designed community of row housing of up to ten units per row, with an average of around 5 units per row. Cresse writes of the architectural style; “In angling them [the rows] at the street corners and forming rudimentary U-shaped courts out of the larger combinations. Lever’s architects effectively forecast certain devices to be incorporated in the garden cities.”32 In addition to the architectural links with the garden city, the use of superblock--large residential block with interior courtyards that could be used for agricultural purposes--would link these new urban places with the open spaces of the countryside, a link that would be more fully formed with Howard’s garden city.33

Likewise, Bournville was established in the Midlands region of England by the chocolatier George Cadbury. He moved his candy works from Birmingham to a new site adequate for expansion as well as one more suitable for production of higher quality chocolate. Though begun in 1879, the more auspicious aspects of the plan for the new town would not be in place until 1895. Cadbury, like the other English industrialists then creating new towns, was very concerned with the well being of his workers. As at Port Sunlight, Cadbury was interested in providing gardening opportunities for his workers: “...the later main development of the domestic building campaign in 1895, undoubtedly assisted in the establishment of the generous house lot for gardening and recreation, instead of the allotment in the center of the superblock for gardening as at
port Sunlight. This single plot of residential green, which seems so hallowed by custom today, claims our attention here as an innovation for working class houses.” The innovations at Bournville would make it one of the more successful and innovative of the new industrial towns of England.

Howard would have been keenly aware of these new urban places, with their modern housing, industrial and open spaces, and planned agricultural opportunities, as he formulated his own ideas. In addition to influences from these planned communities, Howard wrote that his Garden City “scheme is a combination of three distinct proposals. . . .” These proposals included: “(1) the proposals for an organized migratory movement of population of Edward Gibbon Wakefield and of Professor Alfred Marshall; (2) the system of land tenure first proposed by Thos. Spence and afterwards (though with an important modification) by Mr. Herbert Spencer; and (3) the model city of James Silk Buckingham.” Eden notes that, with few exceptions, “all the works referred to saw the light within three or four years of one another, roughly fifty years before the date of Howard’s own book” in 1898.

Howard does not mention contemporary influences on his work, in all likelihood because of the controversial nature of many of the notions floating in the intellectual ether in the last decade of the 1800s. Utopian dreams abounded in the late 1800s, as thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic sought to create a new urban future. Some of these schemes were breathtaking in their scope. For example, in 1894 King Champ Gillette, inventor of the safety razor, in a book entitled The Human Drift put forward the notion of a world city called Metropolis, established on the shore of Lake Erie, to take advantage of the unlimited power supply of Niagara Falls. In Gillette’s audacious
formulation of the future, he wrote, “Under a perfect economical system of production and distribution, and a system combining the greatest elements of progress, there can be only one city on a continent, and possibly only one in the world.” Interestingly, the layout of the megacity he envisioned was based on a system of hexagons, highly reminiscent of ideas of settlement geography incorporated in what came to be known as central place theory.

Clearly, there were numerous visionary and utopian plans and schemes entering into the public consciousness in the last years of the nineteenth century. Though many of these visions of the transformation of the cityscape were probably seen as questionable at best and lunacy at worst, several contemporary utopian ideas played a role in Howard’s culminating vision of the urban future. Two of these thinkers who had a profound impact on Howard, and indeed on much turn of the century thought, were Peter Kropotkin and Edward Bellamy.

Peter Kropotkin was a Russian prince who lived and wrote in England at the turn of the century. He served as Secretary for the Russian Geographical Society in 1873 after conducting research on the glacier areas of Finland and Sweden for the society. Kropotkin was arrested in 1874, and in 1875 wrote an essay in his prison cell entitled “What Geography Ought to Be,” in which he called for the “injection” of social relevance into geography. In 1876 he escaped to England and by 1886, after years spent in Switzerland and France, he settled in England and began writing extensively. As Eltzbacher writes, “By this time there was vast respect for his learning, and he was loved and esteemed in England.” He returned to Russia after the 1917 Revolution, and died there in 1921.
Kropotkin advocated a new understanding of the relationships between humans based on the concept he called “mutual aid,” which he believed was the foundation of human progress. As Eltzbacher notes, “From the evolutionary law of the progress of man from a less happy existence to the happiest existence possible Kropotkin derives the commandment of justice and the commandment of energy. In the struggle for existence human societies evolve toward a condition in which there are given the best conditions for the attainment of the greatest happiness of mankind.”

In explaining the importance of mutual aid, Kropotkin stated that “Sociability is as much a law of nature as mutual struggle.” According to Kropotkin, “If the numberless facts which can be brought forward to support this view are taken into account, we may safely say that mutual aid is as much a law of animal life as mutual struggle, but that, as a factor of evolution, it most probably has a far greater importance, inasmuch as it favours the development of such habits and characters as insure the maintenance and further development of the species, together with the greatest amount of welfare and enjoyment of life for the individual, with the least waste of energy.”

To arrive at this happy existence required the recognition of the importance of mutual aid, which can be thought of as the contention that if humans “behaved rationally, did their due share of socially useful work, eliminated wasteful activities, and exploited scientific discoveries for the general benefit, all could enjoy well-being and still have leisure for developing their spiritual selves.” Woodcock describes mutual aid as “the rather classic statement of the idea common to most anarchists, that society is a natural phenomenon, existing anterior to the appearance of man, and that man is naturally adapted to observe its laws without the need for artificial regulations.”
Livingstone, however, firmly positions Kropotkin in the thinking of his day: "... the moral crusade on which Kropotkin was embarked involved... a naturalization of morality that was tantalizingly analogous in its conceptual structures to that of the Darwinian imperialists. Kropotkin was just as anxious to ground his idealist vision in the mundane world of evolutionary naturalism. He may have read a different social theory out of evolution, but that evolution could exegete the moral principle in nature he had no doubt."\(^{48}\)

Drawing on this, Kropotkin took a somewhat different approach from much of the anarchist thinking of his day. Kropotkin believed in the commune, defined as "a voluntary association that unites all social interests, represented by the groups of individuals directly concerned with them..."\(^{49}\) Kropotkin, then, is an anarchist communist, who believed that "the wage system, in any of its forms, even if it is administered by Banks of the People or by workers' associations through labor checks, is merely another form of compulsion. In a voluntary society it has no longer any place."\(^{50}\) According to Kropotkin, with the recognition of the principles of mutual aid and the rights of humans to free distribution based on their humanity, the state and the "hindrance" of private property would shortly disappear.

Between 1888 and 1890, while living in England and formulating his ideas concerning evolution and mutual aid. Kropotkin published a series of essays in English journals which would be compiled in 1898 into *Fields Factories and Workshops, or Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Manual Work*. These essays, stuffed with examples and statistics relating to industrial and agricultural production, called for a restructuring of the relationship between agriculture and industry, which at
the time of his writing were becoming increasingly separate ways of life. He called for
the decentralization of industry and the creation of harmonious communities.
Kropotkin hearkened back to an earlier time in human development, when “The two
sister arts of agriculture and industry were not... so estranged from one another... .
There was a time, and that time is not so far back, when both were thoroughly
combined: the villages were then the seats of a variety of industries, and the artisans in
the cities did not abandon agriculture... .” Kropotkin continued: “The moral and
physical advantages which man would derive from dividing his work between the field
and the workshop are evident. But the difficulty is, we are told, in the necessary
centralisation of the modern industries.” It was Kropotkin’s contention that
decentralization could be just as powerful a force—and more advantageous for
humans—as were the forces of centralization. As he writes: “The industries must
scatter themselves all over the world, and the scattering of industries amidst all civilised
nations will be necessarily followed by a further scattering of factories over the
territories of each nation.” According to Kropotkin, the promise of this rearrangement
of industrial and agricultural production was great: “The scattering of industries over
the country—so as to bring the factory amidst the fields, to make agriculture derive all
those profits which it always finds in being combined with industry... . and to produce a
combination of industrial with agricultural work—is surely the next step to be made, as
soon as a reorganisation of our present conditions is possible.”

Howard’s ideas concerning the Garden City were also profoundly influenced by
the late nineteenth century utopian author Edward Bellamy. Bellamy was a New
England writer whose novel Looking Backward, published in 1888, was a publishing
sensation and catapulted the little known Bellamy to fame. Millions of Americans and Europeans read the book as a blueprint for a better future. Bellamy's utopian vision was based on communitarian principles of true equality written in an age of deep and growing social inequality. In Bellamy's utopian construction, Julian West, a resident of 1887 Boston, falls asleep and awakens in the year 2000. This premise allows Bellamy to hold up for criticism all aspects of economic, political, and social life of late nineteenth century society through a series of dialogues between West and the man who awakens him, Dr. Leete. Early in his text, Bellamy describes the society of 1887 Boston in raw and descriptive terms that would have resonated with readers:

By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than to compare society as it then was to prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was hunger, and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. These seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust, their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. . .

Bellamy proceeds to describe a completely remade world, in which all are cared for and all work according to their talents. Private property was essentially abolished in the new world, and, as in the following dialogue, labor relations dramatically altered:

"We leave no possible ground for any complaint of injustice," replied Dr. Leete, "by requiring precisely the same measure of service from all."

"How can you do that, I should like to know, when no two men's powers are the same?"

"Nothing could be simpler," was Dr. Leete's reply. "We require of each that he shall make the same effort; that is, we demand of him the best service it is in his power to give."
Bellamy’s ideas were also closely aligned with Kropotkin’s notions of mutual aid, as shown in the following dialogue:

“Charity!” repeated Dr. Leete. “Did you suppose that we consider the incapable class we are talking of objects of charity?”

“Why naturally,” I said, “inasmuch as they are incapable of self-support.”

But here the doctor took me up quickly.

“Who is capable of self-support?” he demanded. “There is no such thing in a civilized society as self-support.”

Like Kropotkin, Bellamy identified human nature with the essential goodness of humanity: “Soon was fully revealed, what the divines and philosophers of the old world never would have believed, that human nature in its essential qualities is good. not bad. that men by their natural intention and structure are generous, not selfish. pitiful. not cruel, sympathetic, not arrogant, godlike in aspirations, instinct with divinest impulses of tenderness and self-sacrifice, images of God indeed, not the travesties upon Him they had seemed.”

This vision of a new world had a profound effect on turn of the century society. Written in a straightforward manner, with an undercurrent of romance, the novel gripped the public imagination, including Howard. As Osborn writes: “Howard confessed that on reading the book he was imaginatively swept away by it. No doubt it appealed to both his moral and scientific enthusiasm. With Bellamy’s vision in mind, he began to think out how co-operative good will might make a start towards a better society on an experimental basis.” Osborn goes on to note that “What he fixed on as his key idea was the co-operative ownership of a large area of land, acquired at agricultural value, on a central portion of which a new town would be built—the newly-created urban values being used, after covering interest on the capital employed, for the
benefit of the inhabitants. At first he imagined, as in Bellamy’s dream, though on a small scale and voluntary, a socialist community in which every industry, including agriculture in the country belt, would be carried on by the community for the good of all.  

As for the effect of the spatial and aesthetic aspects of Bellamy’s new Boston, this also seems to have been reflected in Howard’s vision of the garden city. According to Bellamy, Boston had been remade:

> At my feet lay a great city. Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller enclosures, stretched in every direction. Every quarter contained large open squares filled with trees, among which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late afternoon sun. Public buildings of a colossal size and an architectural grandeur unparalleled in my day raised their stately piles on every side. Surely I had never seen this city nor one comparable to it before.

Though much of Kropotkin and Bellamy’s thinking is now situated in a utopian context, at the turn of the previous century it was considered by many as a new template for the organization of human society. Howard himself, however, did not credit Kropotkin and Bellamy in his earliest writings on the Garden City, and some of Howard’s biographers, such as Eden, discount Kropotkin and Bellamy’s influence. Eden states that because “Fields, Factories and Workshops first appeared in the same year as To-morrow,” it “cannot be regarded as a direct influence on Howard’s own work.” Eden, however, fails to note that the essays constituting the book were published several years prior to Howard’s book, and Howard would likely have been exposed to Kropotkin’s groundbreaking formulations on the relationship between industry and agriculture. Beevers, on the other hand, notes the influence of Kropotkin, writing that “It was not of course the revolutionary element in Kropotkin’s thought that...
attracted him; but he was influenced by that aspect of his anarchism which emphasised local economic initiative and self government."63 Fishman notes that "Kropotkin’s views found a deep response in English Radical circles [which influenced Howard], especially his prediction that all the great urban concentrations of people and power were destined to disappear."64 Fishman further notes that Howard, in an unpublished autobiography, “called Kropotkin ‘the greatest democrat ever born to wealth and power.’”65

As for Bellamy, Eden wrote that “Looking Backward, although it fired Howard’s imagination with a vision of an ideal city, contains no hint of the garden-city doctrine.”66 It may contain no hint of the doctrine, but, as Howard informed Osborn, after reading Bellamy’s work in one sitting, “I was transported by the wonderful power of the writer into a new society, which, having solved for itself the industrial elements of the social problem, had its face turned towards the problems of the higher life. . . . [T]he writer had permanently convinced me that our present industrial order stands absolutely condemned and is tottering to its fall, and that a new and brighter, because a juster, order must ere long take its place.”67

Howard may have neglected to give credit to Kropotkin and Bellamy because of their associations with Russian Anarchism and American Utopianism, respectively, an association which may have restricted the appeal of Howard’s ideas to the English financiers he hoped to attract to his vision. It was much more useful, for his purposes, to be associated with English thinkers and philosophers. Thus, as Mumford notes, Howard “was influenced by Kropotkin, as he had been influenced by earlier [English] utopian writers like Thomas Spence and James Silk Buckingham. [but] carried these
ideas a large step further. The influence of all of these ideas on Howard from both sides of the Atlantic shows most clearly in the gestation of the "town-country magnet" which would offer the best of both worlds to the residents of his Garden City.

The idea of a new future incorporating industrial and agricultural activities in a communal setting centered on a grand urban space set the framework for the Garden City as proposed by Ebenezer Howard in his short book *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* published in 1898, reissued in 1902 as the better known *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*. This work presents the summation of Howard's vision for a new future binding together industrial and agricultural activities into a communal entity, the Garden City. Howard's Garden City is an intellectually slippery concept. As Cresse writes: "...the knack in garden city thought is to know how far to carry one idea before going on to the next. And it is apparently a mistake to break the principles down into such a variety of parts that the conception as a whole is lost sight of."

Howard's work begins simply enough: "The reader is asked to imagine an estate embracing an area of 6,000 acres, which is at present purely agricultural, and has been obtained by purchase in the open market at a cost of L40 an acre, or L240,000.... The estate is legally vested in the names of four gentlemen of responsible position and of undoubted probity and honour, who hold it in trust, first as a security for the debenture-holders, and secondly, in trust for the people of Garden City, the Town-country magnet, which is intended to build thereon."

In one of the most famous diagrams in planning history (Figure 2.2), Howard utilizes the metaphor of magnets which attract population based on amenities which adhere to place, both rural and urban: "The town and the country may, therefore, be
Howard's "Three Magnets," from *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*

regarded as two magnets, each striving to draw the people to itself—a rivalry which a new form of life, partaking of the nature of both, comes to take part in."71 According to Howard, the town magnet offers "... the advantages of high wages, opportunities for employment, [and] tempting prospects of advancement" while the country magnet is "... the source of all beauty and wealth. ... There are in the country beautiful vistas, lordly parks, violet-scented woods, fresh air, sounds of rippling water."72 Howard proposed the creation of what he called the "Town-country magnet." a new arrangement of human society. Howard writes: "But neither the Town magnet nor the Country magnet represents the full plan and purpose of nature. Human society and the beauty of nature
are meant to be enjoyed together. The two magnets must be made one.”

Howard goes on to describe the benefits of this union: “Town and country must be married and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilization.”

Howard was proposing a radically altered stage on which human society would be enacted (Figure 2.3). His description, which is both maddeningly vague in certain features while painfully exact in others, nevertheless stands in stark contrast to the cities then emerging in the late nineteenth century industrial capitalist world. As Howard writes:

Garden City, which is to be built near the centre of the 6,000 acres, covers an area of 1,000 acres... and might be of circular form. Six magnificent boulevards—each 120 feet wide—traverse the city from centre to circumference, dividing it into six equal parts or wards. In the centre is a circular space containing about five and a half acres, laid out as a beautiful and well-watered garden; and, surrounding this garden, each standing in its own ample grounds, are the larger public buildings—town hall, principal concert and lecture hall, theatre, library, museum, picture-gallery, and hospital. The rest of the large space encircled by the ‘Crystal Palace’ is a public park, containing 145 acres, which includes ample recreation grounds within very easy access of all the people. Running all round the Central Park (except where it is intersected by the boulevards) is a wide glass arcade called the “Crystal Palace”, opening on to the park. This building is in wet weather one of the favourite resorts of the people, whilst the knowledge that its bright shelter is ever close at hand tempts people into Central Park, even in the most doubtful of weathers. Passing out of the Crystal Palace on our way to the outer ring of the town, we cross Fifth Avenue—lined, as are all the roads of the town, with trees—fronting which, and looking on to the Crystal Palace, we find a ring of very excellently built houses, each standing in its own ample grounds; and as we continue our walk, we observe that the houses are for the most part built either in concentric rings, facing the various avenues... or fronting the boulevards and roads which all converge to the centre of the town. Asking the friend who accompanies us on our journey what the population of this little city may be, we are told about 30,000 in the city itself and about 2,000 in the agricultural estate. and that there are in the town 5,500 building lots of an average size of 20 feet x 130 feet—the minimum space allotted for the purpose being 20 x 100. On the outer ring of the town are factories, warehouses, dairies, markets, coal yards, timber yards, etc., all fronting on the circle railway, which encompasses the whole town, and which has sidings connecting it with a main line of railway which passes through the estate. The refuse of the town is utilized on the agricultural
portions of the estate, which are held by various individuals in large farms, small holdings, allotments, cow pastures, etc. . . . Thus it is easily conceivable that it may prove advantageous to grow wheat in very large fields, involving a united action under a capitalist farmer, or by a body of co-operators; while the cultivation of vegetable, fruits, and flowers, which requires closer and more personal care, and more of the artistic and inventive faculty, may possibly be best dealt with by individuals, or by small groups of individuals having a common belief in the efficacy and value of certain dressings, methods of culture or artificial and natural surroundings. . . . Dotted about the estate are seen various charitable and philanthropic institutions. . . . as those persons who migrate to the town are among its most energetic and resourceful members, it is but just and right that their more helpless brethren should be able to enjoy the benefits of an experiment which is designed for humanity at large.75

Howard’s genius lay not simply in his Garden City plan but in the synthesis of so many different elements. As Mumford notes:

Where did Howard’s originality lie? Not in special details, but in his characteristic synthesis; in particular these proposals: the provision of a permanent belt of open land, to be used for agriculture as an integral part of the

Figure 2.3
Howard’s Garden City, from Garden Cities of To-Morrow
(Note: Handwritten notes by Howard, from text)
city; the use of this land to limit the physical spread of the city from within, or
encroachments from urban development not under control at the perimeter; the
permanent ownership and control of the entire urban tract by the municipality
itself and its disposition by means of leases into private hands; the limitation of
population to the number originally planned for the area; the reservation for the
community of the unearned increment from the growth and prosperity of the
city, up to the limits of growth fixed; the moving into the new urban area of
industries capable of supporting the greater part of its population; the provision
for founding new communities as soon as the existing land and social facilities
are occupied. In short, Howard attacked the whole problem of the city's
development. . ."76

Howard spends the majority of his text explicating administrative details of the
Garden City, providing an economic and political blueprint for the management of this
new communal society. He describes in detail systems of revenue generation and
expenditures, the structure of governance, and even the handling of urban waste.
Howard was uninterested in rejuvenating old established cities but in building a
thoroughly planned new world: "Garden City is not only planned, but it is planned with
a view to the very latest of modern requirements, and it is obviously always easier, and
usually far more economical and completely satisfactory, to make out of fresh material
a new instrument than to patch up and alter an old one."77

Summarizing the various elements of Howard's Garden City, Aalen writes:

Garden cities were to be small, thoroughly planned towns, each encircled by an
inalienable rural estate and interconnected by a rapid transit system of electric
railways. The population and area of each settlement would be firmly
controlled. A population of 32,000 was envisaged, with the city proper
occupying 1000 acres and the surrounding rural estate 5000 acres. Although of
limited size each garden city would be socially and economically balanced,
accommodating all classes and providing a range of employment in primary,
secondary and tertiary activities. Howard envisaged regional systems of garden
cities, each focused on a larger mother city with a population of perhaps 58,000.
These polycentric 'social cities; indeed anticipate the modern concept of a multi-
centered city region divided by green belts and served by integrated traffic
systems.78
Howard's plan for a new agricultural community excited interest not only among the beleaguered city dwellers of England but also among investors eager to support his ideas. The Garden City Association was formed in 1899, and in 1902 the Garden City Pioneer Company Limited was formed. This company, which was made up primarily of businessmen such as W. H. Lever and George Cadbury, purchased 4,000 acres of rural property 35 miles north of London. The property, called the Letchworth Estate, included a rail line to London, and was ideal for the creation of a new community, despite the fact that in terms of acreage it was less than that specified in Howard’s writings. A joint stock company was registered on September 1, 1903 to raise capital for the proposed city, governed by a board of trustees which would control the property for the new community.79

As financial plans proceeded for the experimental city, the renowned architects and planners Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin were contracted to design the new community. The plan for Letchworth incorporated many features of Howard’s Garden City, including a town center, radial roadways, open spaces, and residential and industrial districts. Financial difficulties, however, slowed the implementation of the plan, which prevented the full realization of the Garden City ideal. As Cresse writes: “The central issue in judging Letchworth could be whether a town that is more comprehensively planned and less thoroughly executed than an earlier type of garden village is more, or less acceptable. Howard, and along with him, Parker and Unwin, simply could not impose their wills on the community as effectively as the old-time industrialists.”80
Despite slower than expected growth, by 1905 the first industries appeared in the new city and construction of over 100 cottages was underway, assuring the project's survival. The major impediment to growth was the strict adherence to communal ownership of land, which was held in a trusteeship and was leased to occupants. As Newton writes: "... progress was slow, and pressure mounted to sell building sites instead of leasing them, particularly for industry; a majority of the directors felt committed to the original intent, however, and the leasehold system was not abandoned. Inevitably this meant comparatively slower growth, but it also meant that the basic ideal remained alive."

The agricultural component of Letchworth was much less successful. The greenbelt around the city "... had for Howard both a utilitarian and an aesthetic aspect. He wanted it to furnish milk, fruit, and vegetables to the inhabitants of his garden city—combining the advantages of freshness and the absence of transport and handling charges." As Macfadyen notes, "Surrounding the whole town [of Letchworth] is a belt of agricultural land comprising about 3,000 acres. This acts as a protection from overgrowth from within or without and assures that the countryside shall always be within walking distance of the centre of town. Some forty acres are let as allotments." The goal of transforming the abandoned countryside and returning it to productive agriculture, however, was largely unsuccessful, and "... the co-operative experiments in agriculture were shortlived and generally the undercapitalized garden city made rather less contribution to thinking about rural development than its origins would suggest."
In 1909, the renamed Garden City and Town Planning Association defined a Garden City as follows: “A Garden City is a town designed for healthy living and industry, of a size which makes possible a full measure of social life, but not larger: surrounded by a rural belt: the whole of the land being in public ownership or held in trust for the community.” Ten years later, at the age of 69 Howard had grown disillusioned with progress of Letchworth in terms of these ideals, and set out to establish a second garden city. This second city, called Welwyn, was only twelve miles from London. This venture suffered many of the problems associated with Letchworth. Nevertheless, Welwyn Garden City would eventually grow into a “vigorous industrial centre... productive, healthy, socially lively and beautiful.”

The Garden City movement was profoundly important in terms of the development of planning in Europe and North America. Garden City Associations sprang up in France (1904), Germany (1904), the United States (1906), and elsewhere. and architects and planners from North America and Europe made pilgrimages to the cities of Letchworth and Welwyn, as well as to Parker and Unwin’s Hampstead Garden Suburb, which, though not a true Garden City, is considered by many to be a masterpiece of planning. The Garden City gospel spread across the Atlantic in the form of the Garden City Association, founded in the United States by Howard and “... a group of American churchmen and financiers.” In describing the Garden City Association of America, Scott notes that “The association proposed to build no model towns itself but rather to advise industrialists how to plan new cities incorporating Howard’s principles.”
From this movement sprang many of the elements of Progressive Era planning as it was developing in the early years of the twentieth century on both sides of the Atlantic. The development of planning can be placed in a larger framework of a growing environmental awareness, of which the Garden City was but one part. As Buder writes:

In the 1900s, the environmental reform movement assumed the stature of a national crusade whose ultimate goal was the transformation of the urban fabric. Though gravely dissatisfied with the bylaw suburbs which had proliferated in the 1890s, most reformers still regarded the suburbs as the best hope for housing reform and urban decentralization. The issue now evolved into how a superior suburban environment might be achieved. Reform interest in the Garden City movement, apart from those who believed as Howard did in garden cities, largely rested on the fact that at Letchworth an effort was under way to comprehensively design a low-density community which could serve as a pilot model for superior types of development. . . .

Despite its links with this growing sense of the possibilities of environmental improvement, few efforts were made to duplicate the complex economic and political system devised by Howard and applied at Letchworth. As Aalen writes:

The Garden City, at least in its full Howardian form, soon became an anachronism, resting as it did on notions of a transformed society produced by a union of town and country and by cooperative endeavor about both of which the twentieth century has been largely incredulous. . . . However, Howard’s high social aims gave the town planning movement, or at least some influential members of it, a visionary quality and sense of purpose which never quite evaporated. . . . [I]t is probably that the main legacy of the rural reformers was in the town planning movement, in garden city ideals and the zeal for introducing rural elements into the towns and suburbs, such as trees, gardens, parks, parkways, and green belts. City gardens became a reality, but not the garden city. ”

Nevertheless, the boldness of Howard’s vision still resonates one hundred years after the publication of To-morrow. Writes Richert and Lapping: “. . . it was in Howard’s nature to embrace the irreconcilable and try to reconcile them. In the Garden City he would synthesize town and countryside—marry them—into a new urban form.

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Indeed, he would not stop there, for the Garden City was a means to a much bigger end: the synthesis of capitalism and socialism—each of which pitted labor against capital—into a social individualism whose hallmark would be a new socioeconomic form—cooperation. This new socioeconomic form was not to be, however, as the ideas of Howard and Bellamy were subsumed into the logic of the early twentieth century capitalist system. Harvey notes the "confused political and intellectual history" of the 1920s and 1930s that had "... Ebenezer Howard forging utopian plans inspired by the anarchism of Geddes and Kropotkin only to be appropriated by capitalist developers, and Robert Moses beginning the century as a political 'progressive' (inspired by the utopian socialism depicted in Edward Bellamy's Looking Backwards) and ending up as the 'power broker' who 'took the meat ax' to the Bronx in the name of the automobilization of America." 

In North America, the impact of the Garden City is generally associated with the late 1920s founding of Radburn, New Jersey and the Greenbelt Cities of the New Deal, and it is generally accepted that the co-operative and communal aspects of the movement did not find fertile ground in the United States. Instead of dreaming of new cities linking together the rural and the urban, during the first decades of the twentieth century city planning in the United States was linked to the City Beautiful Movement, which had as its principle goal the reshaping of existing urban landscapes to enhance the aesthetic appearance of urban areas. However, the ideals of Howard's Garden City had an earlier impact than is generally thought in North America, and found fertile ground in the New South. In creating new cities in the South in the opening decades of the 1900s, there was a binding together of the Garden City and the City Beautiful, with
the former focused on drawing together agricultural and industrial activities into a new urban form and the latter focused on inducing private initiative to improve the urban aesthetic and foster economic growth, a key goal of the progressive elite of the New South.

The City Beautiful Movement

Closely tied to the growing progressive reform spirit of the late 1800s and early 1900s, the City Beautiful movement represents a bold effort to reshape the urban environment in an attempt to lift the moral character of the population while at the same time lifting property values and spurring city growth. Though these objectives may seem at cross purposes, in that municipal improvements might attract more of the less desirable elements that would then require further investments in improvement, the proponents of the City Beautiful fully believed that cities could be saved through the building of magnificent landscaped boulevards and parks, neoclassical civic centers and plazas. These spaces would provide the meeting grounds for all elements of the city, creating a new, egalitarian society of enlightened opportunity. Though much of the City Beautiful design objectives would be criticized as foolishly expensive and grandiose, the ideas themselves—that urban aesthetics can make a difference in the city, that the city and country can be drawn together in a “middle landscape”—had a profound impact on planning in North America.

In many ways the Garden City aesthetic and the City Beautiful aesthetic can be seen as different sides of the same coin. Both sought to reshape the urban environment, incorporating elements of nature into the urban landscape. Moreover, both involved the construction of broad boulevards and large buildings, suggesting monumental works of

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man, while at the same time pulling nature into the city through sprawling landscaped parks. These similarities illustrate the strong links in progressive thinking—whether in rural or urban revitalization—documented in Rodgers’ masterful study of North Atlantic progressivism. A key difference in the two movements, however, is that the City Beautiful is generally associated with the replanning of existing cities while the Garden City consciously called for establishing new urban places removed from the growing urban agglomerations dominating the landscape.

The City Beautiful movement represents a significant step forward in the development of an urban awareness and aesthetic in North America. In much of the historiography of planning, however, the City Beautiful has been caricatured as simple minded plans by an urban elite to construct huge buildings and broad avenues. Indeed, it was much more than this. As Peterson states in his reconstruction of the movement, “That it embraced classic-renaissance architecture and monumental planning is not questioned. What is claimed is that the City Beautiful had other meanings and origins and that their recovery enables us to recognize the phenomenon as a complex cultural movement involving more than the building arts and urban design.”

Peterson goes on to note that “Three concepts are essential to this reconstruction: municipal art, civic improvement, and outdoor art. Each played a vital, if now forgotten, role in launching the movement.”

The origins of the City Beautiful Movement, like so much in planning, can be traced to Frederick Law Olmsted. As Wilson, in his history of the City Beautiful writes: “The taproot of the City Beautiful movement lies in nineteenth-century landscape architecture, personified by Frederick Law Olmsted.” Though Olmsted was
“emphatically not a City Beautiful figure,” he “made three fundamental contributes to the City Beautiful movement.” These included, first, the planning of large park and boulevard systems within the urban fabric; second, he linked the role of parks, and by extension other aesthetic improvements, to increasing private property values, providing an economic rationale for urban improvements for skeptical civic leaders; and third, he helped to establish the role of the outside expert in city planning.

The movement that emerged around 1900 was strongly influenced by the watershed event of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. The “White City,” as has been previously noted, had a profound influence on the perceptions of the city, and more specifically on the possibilities of the city, in America at the turn of the century. However, as Wilson notes, the devotees of the City Beautiful were inspired by a wide range of turn of the century thought, including that coming from disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and biology. Wilson does not include geography in his list, but clearly the strains of environmental determinism, with its implication that changing the environment can change character, then coursing through the discipline was also at work.

City Beautiful advocates were generally considered the “better sort” in a community. As Wilson writes: “City Beautiful advocates were mostly male and members of the urban middle class or upper middle class. They were often the owners or managers of businesses large by community standards, for example, newspaper editors, managers of manufacturing planes, or owners of sizable retail establishments. . . . Other prominent City Beautiful supporters included professional people: attorneys, bankers, physicians, and real estate specialists and investors. These elites worked to
achieve citywide, unifying planning schemes.” As an advocate of the City Beautiful noted in 1910, The proponents of the movement were attracted by a fundamental belief in the power of improvement: “Beautiful and clean cities attract desirable citizens, and real estate values increase. Clothes don’t make the man, but they come pretty near making the city. If you not only wish to attract desirable citizens to this city, but wish to keep those you already have, you have got to make their home, the city itself, attractive to them.”

Wilson describes a fundamentally progressive ideology, firmly rooted in the realities of American social structures, which gave birth to the City Beautiful. This ideology, firmly in place by 1904 can be described as follows: “. . . the City Beautiful solution to urban problems—transforming the city into a beautiful, rationalized entity—was to occur within the existing social, political, and economic arrangements. City Beautiful advocates were committed to a liberal-capitalist, commercial-industrial society and to the concept of private property. They recognized society’s abuses, but they posited a smooth transition to a better urban world. City Beautiful proponents were, therefore, reformist and meliorative, not radical or revolutionary. They accepted the city optimistically, rejecting a return to a rural or arcadian past.”

The bible of the City Beautiful movement was a book first published in 1901. The Improvement of Towns and Cities, or the Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics, by Charles Mulford Robinson. Robinson was not a landscape architect or planner, but instead had worked as a newspaper editor and magazine writer. Strongly influenced by an 1899 trip to Europe underwritten by Harper’s magazine with the purpose of gathering information “on European methods of urban beautification, [Robinson] came
back to promote investment in European-style public squares and streetscapes, fountains and public sculpture, artistically wrought lampposts and ornamented street signs. . . .

Robinson's essential creed was: "We shall not attain to cities and villages that are beautiful until we learnt artistically to plan them." To reach this goal, Robinson in his text addresses "virtually all aesthetic and practical urban developments, historic and recent. . . . Urban sites, watercourses, playgrounds, street patterns, paving, lighting, and sanitation, as well as the aesthetic possibilities of street furniture and utilities, passed under review. He addressed the need for controlling urban smoke, noise, and billboards. He underscored the value of natural beauty by advocating street trees, flower gardens, parks, and drives, but was equally concerned with the sculptural, mural, and architectural arts."

Other movements of the day, such as the Parks and Playgrounds movement, which sought to provide recreational spaces for urban youth, would become closely tied to the City Beautiful, as the call for dramatic urban reform increased in the first decade of the new century. Led by the Playground Association of America, which was formed in 1906 with the purpose of "... the promotion of the play idea, and the dissemination of information in the form of literature, pictures, lantern slides and lectures." this movement sought the social improvement of the character of the inhabitants of urban areas. As the vice president of the Playground Association of America noted in 1909, "When the playgrounds were first started the idea in the minds of the promoters was to keep children off the streets and away from their physical and moral dangers; but as time has gone on the movement has taken up a series of positive physical and social
ideals which are becoming more definite each year.” Wilson notes that, despite some differences in approach between the City Beautiful and the Playground Movement, “what united them was more significant than their divisions. Their points of unity included social control... and agreement about the power of environmental influences on human nature...”

The high point of the City Beautiful came in 1909, with the publication of Daniel Hudson Burnham’s *Chicago Plan and Report*. Burnham had been the Director of Works for the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 with the responsibility for overseeing the massive project, and after the Exposition had been involved in creating large scale plans for San Francisco, Manila, and other cities. In 1907, the Commercial Club of Chicago invited him to work on a new plan for the city. Wrigley describes Burnham as, “A man of great vision and courage... [who] followed his own admonition to planners everywhere to ‘make no little plans.’” The Chicago Plan and Report “... was exhaustive in its coverage: the history of city planning, of Chicago, and of the Chicago plan; analyses and proposals regarding parks, transportation, streets and boulevards; a comprehensive and fully detailed treatment, with exquisite rendered plans and elevations, of the ‘Heart of the City,’ including a monumental yacht basin and museum group of gigantic proportions and overwhelming magnificence.” The Chicago Plan, which garnered tremendous attention around the country and overseas, justly stands as a part of Robinson’s City Beautiful movement, “... for in large part both were concerned primarily with appearance, Robinson by repeated profession throughout his writings, Burnham because visual stylistic conformity was for him
essential to the eclectic ‘classical’ architecture through which he sought impressiveness.”

Though little of the City Beautiful inspired Chicago Plan was actually implemented due to the tremendous cost, the impact of the movement can be seen in several cities, most notably Washington, DC, but also in smaller urban areas such as Denver, Kansas City, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. However, the movement came under increasingly intense criticism as a wasteful use of limited funds for meaningless beautification problems that did little to address the real ills of the city, such as housing, poverty, and crime. It was this charge that formed the central theme of the countervailing trend in urban thought, which came to be known as the City Practical. This countermovement was led by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who, in response to an inquiry about the City Beautiful, charged: “I share your feeling of doubt in so far as to look with distrust on a great deal of well meant agitation for ‘beautifying’ cities, which seems to proceed as though beauty were something that could be put on like a garment or applied like whitewash,” an interesting comment given his father’s involvement in the whitewashed Columbian Exposition.

The criticisms by Olmsted and other served to subvert the City Beautiful movement, which lost out to the more “practical” reforms of the Progressive Movement of the 1910s and 1920s. More focused on social reforms such as housing and ameliorating the impacts of uncontrolled industrialization on urban areas, the City Practical seemingly reflected the progressive spirit which sought to implement reforms that would have a more immediate impact on the lives of urban dwellers. These reforms, which included street paving, sanitation, public housing, and land use controls.
would be packaged into a "comprehensive" plan, which became the watchword of the era, as city leaders turned to outside experts for large scale plans which addressed every aspect of the city. The City Beautiful movement was largely spent by 1914, and Newton notes its demise, as "with the passage of time, less and less was heard of the City Beautiful movement as such. At first, for a period of moderate duration, the prevailing attitude toward the movement was one of sensible discrimination—differentiating between the sound, socially oriented, organically derived elements on the one hand and the capricious, preconceived, often ridiculously pretentious superimposed ones on the other. But eventually, following the regrettable human habit of seeing things as all-black or all-white, it became fashionable... to deride everything about the City Beautiful movement indiscriminately." In later years the grand boulevards, slashing diagonals, and monumental architecture of the City Beautiful became associated with colonial, fascist, and Soviet city planning, as represented by plans for Canberra, Hitler’s Berlin, and Stalin’s Moscow, though Robinson and Burnham would have been undoubtedly uncomfortable with the ideologies these city plans embodied.

Nevertheless, the City Beautiful had a tremendous effect on the planning of cities. As Wilson writes: "The limitations of the City Beautiful movement... aside, the movement achieved much. It spoke to yearnings for an ideal community and to the potential for good in all citizens. Therein lies its most important but least remarked contribution. For all its idealistic rhetoric the movement was imbued with the courage of practicality, for it undertook the most difficult task of all, to accept its urban human material where found, to take the city as it was, and to refashion both into something better." Wilson goes on to contrast the City Beautiful and the Garden City, though he
employs a classic misreading of Howard’s urban vision: “Contrast its realism with the contemporaneous anti-urban Garden City movement, which proposed radical deconcentration and the destruction of the great cities.” 118

Both of these projects, however, had much in common, including the desire to remake the city, to increase wealth and opportunity, and to elevate human nature. These different strands of urban improvement can be seen in the new cities of the New South. As Wilson writes, the South suffered from “cultural lag,” adding that “The areas outside the Deep South, where the greater proportion of City Beautiful plans appeared, were those enjoying the most City Beautiful success.” 119 Wilson thus fails to note the impact of the City Beautiful on cities in the South, such as Charleston, or in the creation of new towns in the South, such as the planned city of North Charleston. The legacy in the American South of both the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements represents an undocumented piece of planning history and urban geography.

The Emergence of a Profession

The Garden City, the City Beautiful, and the City Practical all relied on experts, which is true of much of the reformist impulse associated with the Progressive Era. This period, marked by bold social experimentation at both the local and the national levels, including regulation of commerce, provision of insurance, municipal ownership of utilities, and other social reforms that reshaped American life, required the knowledgeable hand of a trained professional. As one of the emerging professions anchored in reform, this period was critical for the development of planning, with 1909 a critical year. Coming towards the midpoint of the Progressive Era, 1909 saw the
emergence of both an academic discourse and the beginnings of a national organization that would provide the foundation for planning through the 1910s and beyond.

The goals of the progressives included social justice, honest government, and regulation of business. By 1908, as Wiebe notes in his history of the time, there were important changes in the gathering winds of progressive thought in America: “The critical transition in these trends from a local to a national orientation, from defensiveness to confident attack, and from diffuse reform to integrated programming occurred roughly around 1908. The flow of local reformers into Washington was quickening, progressives were introducing the full complement of their national economic programs, and theoreticians were urging them on with ambitious guides to America’s future.”

The following year represented a benchmark year for the emergence of planning. The first National Conference on City Planning was held in Washington, DC. on May 21 and 22. The meeting brought together prominent landscape architects, engineers, urban activists, and businessmen, all concerned with the fate and future of North America’s cities. The opening address, by financier Henry Morgenthau, set the tone of the conference:

The civic endeavors of the intelligent part of our community aim at greatest efficiency, and the planning is essential to such efficiency. We have had a moral awakening, and are ready and anxious to do our duty. We are all proud of our country, its achievements, and the opportunity it has offered us and is offering others. We will not permit anything to mar its onward and upward progress, if we can help it. There is an evil which is gnawing at the vials of the country, to remedy which we have come together—an evil that breeds physical disease, moral depravity, discontent, and socialism—and all these must be cured and eradicated or else our great body politic will be weakened.
On the program of this first conference were two of the most important figures in city planning during this period: Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John Nolen. Olmsted, the inheritor of the mantle of his father, spoke with authority on "The Scope of City Planning Abroad," while Nolen, a young but already experienced planner who had received a Master of Arts degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University in 1905, spoke on "What is Needed in American City Planning." The approaches and ideas of these two men would dominate much of city planning throughout the first decades of the century.

As has been previously noted, Olmsted was closely linked to the City Practical movement, with its reliance on broadly based comprehensive planning. Olmsted had graduated from Harvard University in 1894 and immediately joined his father's renowned firm. After Olmsted Sr.'s descent into mental instability, Olmsted, Jr. and his half brother John Charles Olmsted formed Olmsted Brothers, which would be the most prominent landscape architecture and planning firm in America. In 1899, Olmsted assisted in forming the American Society of Landscape Architects, the first professional organization in that field. He contributed greatly to the establishment of the academic discipline of landscape architecture at Harvard University, further professionalizing the field.122

Though Olmsted had learned much of his art from his visionary father, Olmsted Jr. would eventually become associated with the comprehensive planning movement of the City Practical. This approach would become the basis for modern planning, as the aesthetically charged City Beautiful, with its landscaped parks, boulevards, and colossal civic centers, wilted. According to Peterson, Olmsted "conceived of planning as a
centralized endeavor in which a single expert or group of experts formulated a scheme intended to shape the further development of an entire urban area for the foreseeable future. . . . Such thinking did in fact represent the major thrust of the American city planning movement from its City Beautiful beginning at the opening of the twentieth century through its City Practical phase and beyond. . . .”

As one of these “experts” Olmsted addressed the first National Conference on the state of planning in Europe. Olmsted opens his talk with a statement of his inadequacy to address such a broad topic, which was typical of this modest, self-effacing man: “I speak with much hesitation on the very broad subject which has been assigned to me, the more so because I have recently returned from some months of hurried travel to Europe devoted to the study of city planning.” In his speech chronicling the progress of city planning in Europe, Olmsted studiously ignored the Garden City movement, which had such a profound impact not only in England but also on the continent during the first decade of the century. Olmsted focused instead on “German and Swiss town planning, describing cities presumably far more orderly than any in America.”

Olmsted was particularly interested in districting, a precursor to zoning regulations: “Now, one of the purposes in view in the system of district building regulations which forms a feature of recent city planning in Europe is to give to every lot owner in each district in the city a fair degree of assurance as to the kind of thing which may be done and which may not be done in the way of building and of commercial and industrial occupations in the vicinity of his lot; to give him, in other words, the same kind of protection for which a man is willing to pay an extra price.
when he buys in a 'restricted' neighborhood." This highly legalistic response to the urban environment stands in sharp contrast to the principles of the City Beautiful—a phrase which was never used at the conference—and even of Olmsted’s visionary father.

Olmsted concluded his presentation, however, with a challenge to the emerging profession of city planning: “Here in America we seem to go on complacently perpetuating our old mistakes long after we have recognized them, preparing over again in our suburbs without material variation the same conditions that have given rise to results we deplore in the older parts of our cities. How to change this hopeless fatalism in our attitude toward the more fundamental factors of city growth is what we most need to learn from the example of progressive European cities.”

John Nolen was also called upon as an expert to provide a statement at the conference’s first full session. Nolen, among the first graduates of Harvard University’s program in landscape architecture at the age of 34, brought with him a wide range of experience prior to his training at Harvard, including work in business and education and an extended trip of his own to Europe. Hancock writes: “...his background equipped him with a point of view as a planner, more characteristic of the young, militant, middle-class reformers of the twentieth century than of the more established, paternalistic stewards of wealth and their retinue of the late nineteenth. From both groups, however, he inherited the common legacy of a sense of responsible leadership and an adherence to the main tenets of the American value system.”

Nolen’s broad background and practical experience set him apart from much of the more idealistic City Beautiful leaders, such as Robinson and the visionary Daniel
Hudson Burnham, whose ambitious plan for Chicago, published in 1909, represents a culmination of the City Beautiful movement.\textsuperscript{129} As Hancock notes: "There is no doubt that Nolen considered the administrative problems of city government the most pressing domestic issues of the day."\textsuperscript{130} This concern, first expressed in 1895, would carry through his career as a planner. Hancock writes: "...Nolen stood some distance from the many American landscape architects at the century's end who were still concentrating upon grandiose appearance rather than everyday utility in the practice of their profession."\textsuperscript{131} Still, the advocates of the City Beautiful could claim a measure of success embodied in Nolen's planning work: "John Nolen and other city practical planners, far from abandoning the City Beautiful, appropriated the movement's emphasis on civic consciousness and utility as well as its naturalistic and formal designs."\textsuperscript{132}

In the inaugural issue of American City, Nolen defined planning in a straightforward manner: "City planning is simply a recognition of the sanitary, economic, and aesthetic laws which should govern the original arrangement and subsequent development of our cities."\textsuperscript{133} Nolen goes on to write that "...the conditions to which these laws must be applied are exceedingly varied. each city being different in some respects for every other. parts of the same city different from its other parts, and the same parts often varying in their use and purpose from decade to decade."\textsuperscript{134} Like Olmsted, Nolen was also committed to the rationalization of the city according to use: "The subdivision of our cities and towns into parts, each to serve a peculiar need, is a subject to which we have hardly turned attention. We must consider the value of the 'zone' treatment used in European cities, each zone controlled by
different regulations. . . Homogeneity of neighborhoods and stability of real estate values are points of importance in this connection."\textsuperscript{135}

Though there is apparently no indication in Nolen’s writings of an early influence of the Garden City movement, it is difficult to imagine that he could enter Harvard in 1903—the year Letchworth was established—without being cognizant of Howard’s scheme for a new urban future. In fact, Nolen’s speech to the Conference on City Planning seems to strike a delicate balance between the Garden City, the City Beautiful, and the City Practical: “What is needed in the planning and rebuilding of American cities? A critical observer, especially one having the achievements of the European and South American cities in mind, is tempted to answer: Everything. For, with few exceptions, our cities are lacking in almost all of those essentials of convenience, comfort, orderliness, and appropriate beauty that characterize the cities of other nations.”\textsuperscript{136} In his concise presentation, Nolen emphasizes three points: “We need (1) to make recreation more democratic; (2) to develop the individuality of our cities; (3) to stop waste.”\textsuperscript{137}

By placing recreation first, Nolen emphasizes his faith in the link between environmental improvement and civic improvement. As he wrote: “The poorest workingman in Europe has some advantages and opportunities which here the wealthiest can seldom command. . . . Fine city streets, orderly railroad approaches and surroundings, truly beautiful public buildings, open green squares and plazas, refreshing water fronts, ennobling statuary, convenient and ample playgrounds, numerous parks, parkways, and boulevards, art museums, theaters, opera houses and concert halls. . . .”\textsuperscript{138} Nolen continues by extolling the need to “. . . improve our cities by the
development of their individuality, their personality.”\textsuperscript{139} He goes on to explain that “With but five or six exceptions... American cities differ from one another only that some are built more with bricks than with wood, and others more with wood than with brick; their monotony haunts one like a nightmare.”\textsuperscript{140}

Nolen’s concluding point is the one that had bloodied the advocates of the City Beautiful: cost. Nolen was keenly aware of the limits to urban expenditures, as well as of the need to work within the confines of limited taxation powers of local government. Nolen wisely frames expenditures on city planning not as costs but as investments: “By saving waste in these ways and by the timely investing (not spending) of public money in great enterprises we shall be able to get many of the improvements which we all now desire, but which we think we can not afford.”\textsuperscript{141} In a remark that stands as an eloquent call to arms, Nolen reminds his listeners that “What we see about us is not the finished product, but only the raw material. We should, therefore, frame an ideal of what we wish to the to be, and then work to make it real.”\textsuperscript{142}

The year 1909 was an auspicious one for the development of the profession of city planning. Not only was the first planning conference held in the United States but a whole series of initiatives came to fruition in that watershed year. In Great Britain, the parliament enacted a town planning act permitting local governments to prepare comprehensive plans. At the University of Liverpool, in Great Britain’s rapidly urbanizing Midlands, the first academic department of planning was established. In Wisconsin, the legislature adopted the first state law allowing local governments to establish planning commissions. And, at Harvard University, James Sturgis Pray, chair
of the Department of Landscape Architecture, offered the first city planning course at an American university.

This course offering further cemented the strong link between the development of the profession of city planning and landscape architecture. At Harvard University, one of the most prestigious schools in the America, the development of a planning curriculum occurred under the aegis of the emerging profession of landscape architecture. In the 1890s, a program in landscape architecture, which was generally considered an applied science rather than an academic discipline, was supported by many at Harvard, including Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, as part of a pragmatic curriculum. As Livingstone writes: "[Shaler's] passion was to keep that marriage of technical and academic culture alive, and he therefore saw the future of American education in introducing applied science to the existing university curriculum. . . . Apart. . . from its utilitarian effects, cross disciplinary fertilizations would counteract the worst dangers of specialization. So if the curriculum must be modified to meet the need of an industrial society, it should preserve at the same time the spirit of culture traditionally associated with higher learning." As Livingstone writes: "[Shaler's] passion was to keep that marriage of technical and academic culture alive, and he therefore saw the future of American education in introducing applied science to the existing university curriculum. . . . Apart. . . from its utilitarian effects, cross disciplinary fertilizations would counteract the worst dangers of specialization. So if the curriculum must be modified to meet the need of an industrial society, it should preserve at the same time the spirit of culture traditionally associated with higher learning."  

Along with Shaler, Charles Eliot, the President of Harvard, began pushing for a curriculum in landscape architecture, distressed that there was no course of study for his son, who desired to become a landscape architect, to follow. His son went on to a short but distinguished career with the Olmsted firm, and after his untimely death in 1897 a wealthy benefactor endowed the program. "Thus it was," Newton writes. "that Harvard in 1900 established the first university course of professional training in
landscape architecture... with a professorship and, a few years later, a traveling fellowship.\textsuperscript{145}

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was asked in 1900 to undertake the development of this new professional curriculum. The program fell under the Department of Architecture until 1908, when a separate Department of Landscape Architecture was created.\textsuperscript{146} During this period, James Sturgis Pray and Henry Vincent Hubbard, two critical leaders in the development of both landscape architecture and city planning, would join the new program, and Olmsted came to occupy the Charles Eliot Professorship. Pray, who would become department chair in 1908, wrote: "The aim of this instruction is two-fold: first, to train certain young men to become efficient office assistants and eventually successful landscape architects of independent practice, and, second, to instruct a much larger number of other young men in the purposes, principles, and uses of Landscape Architecture, in order that they may later be more informed and appreciative as clients and citizens."\textsuperscript{147}

The founding and furthering of this academic tradition served to strengthen the nascent profession of landscape architecture. In 1909, recognizing the importance of the city in landscape architecture, Harvard offered a new course in "The Principles of City Planning," taught by Pray with the "occasional assistance" of Olmsted, who was still a professor but had largely returned to the rigors of his successful private practice. Pray describes this initial offering as "essentially a research course, but with lectures and assigned reading. It includes a thesis on some subject of individual investigation. The lectures aim to cover, in theory, the general field of City Planning, parts of which are treated in more detail, with practice in actual problems of design and construction in
other courses. In the lectures, the attempt is made to show certain of the more important causes that have determined the forms and arrangements of city-plans, and to deduce certain fundamental principles of organization, afterward applying these to some of the problems of the modern city.\textsuperscript{148} The lectures were buoyed by textbooks such as Raymond Unwin's *Town Planning in Practice*, which in graceful tones likened the city to a work of art: "In desiring powers for town planning our town communities are seeking to be able to express their needs, their life, and their aspirations in the outward form of their towns, seeking, as it were, freedom to become the artists of their own cities, portraying on a gigantic canvas the expression of their life."\textsuperscript{149}

Through this program in landscape architecture, many of the early lights of city planning passed, including John Nolen, Charles Downing Lay, and Hubbard. Harvard served as the center for this emerging academic discourse, though the professionalization of city planning as exemplified by a named course of study would not be instituted until 1923 as an available concentration. It was not until 1929 that the Harvard School of City Planning was established under the leadership of Hubbard, drawing on a collaborative spirit then emerging at the University.\textsuperscript{150} The course of study followed by students of the 1920s and onwards was far removed from the civic aestheticism of Olmsted, Sr. and the City Beautiful advocates. As Newton writes: "With obvious good sense [students] were actively concerned with the basic human problems, the socioeconomic maladies and functional disorders of the city. This, rather than a romantically preconceived form of ‘beauty,’ they wisely recognized as a valid starting point in the struggle for urban excellence. Unhappily, however, they were too often totally unconcerned about appearance and cared little if at all about physical
This loss of an urban aesthetic would haunt city planning progress through the remainder of the century, as poorly planned and oftentimes unsightly housing, freeways, public buildings, and suburbs began to sprawl across the landscape.

The Harvard program in landscape architecture gave birth to the course of study in city planning. This program would prove to be extraordinarily influential in creating the profession of planning, providing an intellectual foundation to the efforts in North America and elsewhere to shape and reshape the city. Fifty years after the initial offerings in landscape architecture, G. Holmes Perkins, Chair of the Department of Regional Planning at Harvard, put forward this assessment of the development of the profession: “In the United States varied threads of planning thought and action have developed from many and often unsuspected quarters...”

Perkins goes on to note the passing of the enlightened generalist planner who was to be the product of the Harvard program, as specialization took hold of the profession: “A team of social scientists, architects, engineers, and administrators had in the larger cities replaced the general practitioner to the well-being of the patient,” to which he adds that “At Harvard we are convinced that this evolution has been a healthy one.”

The “major strands” that had developed in planning thought for generalist planners such as Olmsted, Nolen, and others associated with Harvard and subsequent planning programs of the 1920s included the City Beautiful and the Garden City. The emergence of planning in America is closely linked to these traditions, despite efforts to ignore them or act as if they are minor or even aberrant views of the city. Employing these strands, the new profession of city planning would become deeply involved in the comprehensive planning of existing cities, the planning of suburban spaces, as well as...
the planning of new cities and towns. During the Progressive Era, the planning of new industrial and agricultural cities in North America, and specifically in the New South, stands as an important feature of the effort of progressives to reshape the landscape of America.

**End Notes**


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10 Newton, 467.

11 Olmsted, 303.

13 Rybczynski, 387.

14 Scott, 33.

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18 Newton, 367.

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39 Ibid., 88.
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43 Ibid., 98.
47 Ibid., 216.
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122 Jon A. Peterson, "Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.: The Visionary and the Professional," in *Planning the Twentieth Century American City*, eds. Mary Corbin Sies and Christopher Silver (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 44.

123 Ibid. 49.

124 American Society of Planning Officials, 63.

125 Scott, 97.

126 American Society of Planning Officials, 69.

127 Ibid., 70.


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130 Hancock, 305.
131 Ibid., 307.

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141 Ibid., 75.

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143 James S. Pray, "The Department of Landscape Architecture in Harvard University," Landscape Architecture 1, no. 2 (1911), 54.


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148 Ibid., 66-67.


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152 Perkins, 316.

153 Ibid.
Chapter 3

New Cities and Towns in America

At the 1909 Conference on City Planning, the planning of new cities and towns in America received scant attention. None of the speeches were directed exclusively to this topic, and it is only mentioned in a handful of presentations. Among the few substantive remarks concerning Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, arguably the most important and innovative concept in planning, was a letter from the British Ambassador to the United States which was read at the conference: "Is it not, therefore, our duty to seriously consider whether any measures could be adopted for endeavoring to transfer the transferable industries from the great cities to the smaller ones...? An effort of this kind has already been made in England by the foundation of the so-called Garden City... about 40 miles from London... I hope that those of you who are occupied by this terrible city problem in the United States will give some of your thoughts to the idea underlying this plan, the advantage of which I have sought to indicate in these few lines."

Only one speaker, Robert Anderson Pope, a landscape architect from New York City, in an address entitled "Some of the Needs of City Planning in America," even gave notice of the establishment of new cities and towns as a possible program for America: "England has given the best example of garden cities and has demonstrated that they are economically feasible, and that it is possible for a working man to have a pleasant looking dwelling with pleasant surroundings. The creation of Letchworth, Bournville, Port Sunlight and others are the notable instances of this accomplishment." In his recommendations, Pope states "That philanthropic demonstration be made of the
economic soundness of the garden-city idea in the suburbs of all our large cities, basing the experiment on those several successful English examples.”

Planning a New Urban Future

The speakers at the first National Conference failed to take notice of the planning of new towns that had occurred in America and was accelerating during the Progressive Era. The impetus for planning and developing new cities and towns as part of North America’s urban geography was based on a variety of oftentimes interrelated factors. These factors included a spiritual or utopian impulse, property speculation, and industrialization. During the mid-1800s, however, the forces of speculation and industrialization would grow to dominate the creation of new cities. The reasons for this are enveloped in the general conquest of the American landscape by urban industrial capital. The interests of capital were in general not served by founding cities based on spiritual or environmental concerns, but instead on addressing the growing tensions between labor and capital by locating industrial enterprises in places of cheap labor, generally at a remove from larger cities. “Here was the template.” Earle writes. “for American industrialization. And what more logical place to combine machines with cheap, unskilled labor in the rural ‘suburb’ of the great mercantile cities of the early nineteenth century, near a supply of seasonally unemployed rural labor.” Though this process has not been fully documented across North America, in their ground breaking study of emerging industrial districts in Baltimore of the mid-1800s. Muller and Groves found that “…on the basis of the evidence it is reasonable to speculate that the transitional city was evolving a fragmented or cellular structure.” Warner has documented the pattern of residential fragmentation resulting from new transportation
technology—specifically the electric streetcar—and its effects in his classic study of Boston:

With these changes in scale and plan many of the familiar modern problems of city life began to emerge: the bedroom town, the inundation of country villages by commuters; the sudden withdrawal of whole segments of an old neighborhood's population; the rapid building and rapid decay of entire sections of a city; the spread of the metropolis beyond any encompassing political boundaries; the growth of non-elective agencies of government to meet metropolitan transportation, sanitary, and recreation demands; and, above all, the discipline of the lives of city dwellers into specialized transportation paths, specialized occupations, specialized home environments, and specialized community relationships.6

It is the development of this fragmented structure, driven by the interests of capital, which dominated the founding of cities in North America in the latter decades of the 1800s and into the Progressive Era. As capitalists took their operations farther from the core city, initially linked by rail lines and subsequently by the electric streetcar, they would in many instances—though certainly not all—apply enlightened planning principles and an environmental aesthetic that was part and parcel of the Garden City and City Beautiful movements. The goal of these new urban environments was to solve the vexing "labor question" plaguing industrial capitalism, the problem of simultaneously maintaining low wages and a stable workforce.

These new cities and towns go by a variety of descriptive names, including industrial suburb, model company town, and satellite city, leading to a measure of confusion. Though these names have on occasion been used interchangeably, most clearly in Taylor's 1915 classic *Satellite Cities*, which was subtitled *A Study of Industrial Suburbs*, they can be viewed as embodying an evolution of the dispersal of capital away from the central city of the nineteenth and twentieth century. For the purposes here, an industrial suburb or district is an industrial zone which evolves...
outside of the core city in which a variety of oftentimes related industrial activities are located. An industrial district will be at a remove from but linked to the city core. A company town is a newly established town constructed and managed by one industrial enterprise. These towns were often considered "models" for the new industrial operations in America. In many ways, the company town represents the rationalization of the industrial district, removing the production process—and thus the workforce—from the intoxicating effects of the large city and providing control through the provision of housing, schools, health care, stores, and other necessities. Satellite cities, on the other hand, are a more fully articulated urban enterprise. As defined by Purdom, "a satellite town is therefore meant [to be] a town in the full sense of the word, a distinct civic unit with its own corporate life, possessing the economic, social and cultural characteristics of a town... while still maintaining its own identity in some sort of relation of dependence upon a great city." Satellite cities tend to be large speculative enterprises by entrepreneurs seeking to attract industrial enterprises by creating a new urban space, including infrastructure such as streets, water, sewer, and electric lines, residential districts and in some cases housing, as well as commercial districts, schools, parks, and other amenities.

Because the term "satellite city" carries with it the implication that the new city will remain in a position of relative subordination to a larger urban area, and that its relationship will be one of dependence, a broader term is more useful, such as "new industrial city." Town planner John Nolen explained the unique aspects of this type of new city to the Eleventh National Conference on City Planning as follows: "... but there are even greater advantages in laying out entirely new industrial cities. They
permit deliberate choice of location, based upon regional survey, the development of an efficient plan, and the limitation of area and population." Nolen outlined the requirements of a new industrial city to his audience: "The requirements of manufacturing cities are: level land, cheap land, few streets (giving large blocks), room for extension; railroad or water facilities; proper building zones; main thorofares for hauling (no grade crossings); proximity of factory sites to good housing; trolley or motor bus transportation for employees if home are not within walking distance; location of factories with due consideration to prevailing winds; public utilities (water, gas, electricity and sewers), and water or other power." Nolen went on to provide more detail in his description of new industrial cities: "Equally important are homes for workmen. Consideration must be given to the house itself; the garden, the protected residential zone; local streets: recreation areas: schools and part-time school: churches and other social institutions; and main streets to the factory, to low-cost housing districts, and the down-town district, to shops, commercial amusement, public institutions of higher life, civic buildings (government buildings, leisure-time buildings, such as library, art museum, community building for social recreation and discussion, etc.)." Nolen, then, was describing for his listeners the creation of a fully realized city dedicated to industrial activities as a vehicle for sound planned development.

The dispersal of industrial capitalism through industrial districts, company towns, and new industrial cities can be traced to many factors. As Taylor, noted in his groundbreaking study:

Many reasons are readily apparent for the location of these new industrial communities. The impulse toward cheap land, low taxes and elbow-room throws them out from the large centers of population. These are the centrifugal forces. The centripetal forces are equally powerful and bind them as satellites
beyond the outer rings of the mother city. Even the towns which . . . have attained a considerable measure of self-sufficiency and lie perhaps across state boundaries are bound by strong economic ties. Through switch-yards and belt-lines, practically all the railroad facilities developed during years of growth, which are at the disposal of a downtown establishment, are at the service of the industry in the suburb.11

As has been noted, industrial suburbs began to develop in the mid-1800s, as industrial enterprises drew away from the central city. Numerous company towns were also established during this period, particularly by textile magnates in New England, though these communities would become a more prevalent feature of the urban landscape in the latter decades of that century. Company towns established in New England between 1830 and 1860 served as model communities for later industrialists and were closely linked to the English industrial towns of Port Sunlight and Bourneville. Garner describes these company towns:

In New England, a relative isolation together with an emerging industrial landscape distinguished the company town from other small towns and agricultural villages. Because of the need for power to run textile machinery, trip-hammers, forges, and saws, the company developed a site isolated from large coastal cities and sometimes distant from trade routes in order to tap a river or stream. Its location and single-enterprise economy encouraged only those businesses which supported the company to settle. The lack of potential growth simply did not attract outside investment. Independent merchants and grocers might sell to company employees, but their stores were usually rented from the company. The appearance of closely built factories and houses contrasted with less densely settled farming communities, which operated on a very different scale. Even when viewed from far away, the company town presented a distinct image.12

Paternalism was a major feature of company towns, in which "One enterprise owned the real estate and employed the work force."13 As Garner writes: "Although opinions varied as to the worth of paternalism, there obviously was a time when industrialists needed to exercise greater responsibility in the treatment of labor."14 Though this is a debatable proposition, it is clear that industrialists of the nineteenth
century believed that they needed to exercise responsibility, and hence control, over the labor force. At various points in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the company town would be seen alternatively as the savior of industrial capitalism and the culmination of the evils of capitalism. Three new cities from this era, Pullman, Vandergrift, and Gary, provide insight into the emergence and evolution of city planning in the United States while the founding of a fourth community, Forest Hills Gardens, is illustrative of an alternative form of planning that draws together various strands of thought then coursing through this nation.

**Pullman, Illinois**

Though the paternalism of the company town and the aspirations of labor would clash at many points in America, the most famous of these clashes occurred at Pullman, which in many ways became symbolic of the problems of organizing industrial activities along a company town model. Pullman was established in 1880 on a 4,000-acre tract nine miles south of downtown Chicago. The town was to be the headquarters and showplace for the extraordinarily successful Pullman Car Company, the manufacturer of the premier train sleeping car. George Mortimer Pullman, whose "... background had the simple lines of the self-made man common to the heroes of the Horatio Alger novels,"15 converted his first coach cars to sleepers in 1858. In 1867, the "... Pullman Palace Car Company was chartered and a million dollars in capital stock was issued, and George Pullman was appointed President and General Manager."16

The company's remarkable success led its president to consider building a new factory complex that would consolidate the company's various operations. Another factor in Pullman's thinking, however, was the growing potential for labor violence,
particularly after the Great Railroad Strike of 1877, after which Pullman and other
industrialists began searching for methods to exert control over their workers. As Buder
writes: “The sleeping-car king abhorred inefficiency resulting from workingmen’s
drinking to excess, dissipating their time and health, and moving pointlessly from job to
job. Like many, he believed these practices too costly to be tolerated.” 17

To overcome the propensity for Pullman’s workforce to engage in behavior that
he found abhorrent, the sleeping car king elected to remove his workers from the
pernicious effects of the outside world, isolating them in a new city. Pullman needed to
provide amenities and opportunities, and “of necessity he constructed a community
which provided a place for shopkeeper and professional, as well as laborer and clerk.” 18
Pullman desired both beauty and order in his new community, and “The proposed town
was not to be the result of casual growth, but a planned creation, reflecting forethought
and taste.” 19 As a visitor to Pullman noted in 1895: “Very gratifying is the impression
of the visitor who passes hurriedly through Pullman and observes only the splendid
provision for the present material comforts of its residents. What is seen in a walk or
drive through the streets is so pleasing to the eye that a woman’s first exclamation is
certain to be, ‘Perfectly lovely!’ It is indeed a sight as rare as it is delightful. What
might have been taken for a wealthy suburban town is given up to busy workers, who
literally earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. No favorable sites are set apart for
drones living on past accumulations, and if a few short stretches are reserved for
residences which can be rented only by those whose earnings are large, this is an
exception; and it is not necessary to remain long in the place to notice that clergymen,
officers of the company, and mechanics live in adjoining dwellings.” 20
The city of Pullman, then, represents a marked shift forward from the small New England company town to a fully functioning city, incorporating by 1884 over 1,400 houses and a population of 8,000.\textsuperscript{21} As Reps writes: "... the developers of Pullman produced a three-dimensional plan in which the design of individual buildings received as much attention as the layout of streets, parks, and building sites. Professional designers, rather than a company engineer, had the responsibility for the plan, and they appear to have been given a fairly free hand. Pullman thus constitutes a valuable reference point in American planning—an example of a complete town, conceived and built as a unit, and under the direction of a team of designers who presumably embodied in the plan the most up-to-date theories and practices of town design."\textsuperscript{22}

The city of Pullman was to be a different sort of community, one that "would engender values which Pullman referred to as 'habits of respectability'. . . . He believed the community would develop a superior type of American workingman."\textsuperscript{23} Houses were built of brick and furnished with amenities not available to the average worker in the cities of North America. In addition, the company constructed buildings that would provide community amenities. Most prominent was the Arcade Building. "... a block long and ninety feet high, [it] was the most impressive building in the town and the center of community life. Its central section, flanked by two symmetrical wings reflected the building’s interior arrangement. A huge glass and iron arcade ran from front to back. Along the sides of the ground floor were shops and a staircase which led to a gallery overlooking the activity below."\textsuperscript{24} Landscape boulevards, parks, a school, a library, a theater, and a church were all constructed by the company, establishing Pullman as a fully functioning city.
In addition, George Pullman hoped to diversify his city, pulling it past the "one company town" model towards a true satellite city. As Buder notes: "George Pullman was eager to attract outside businesses, which would protect the community from dependence on the well-being of one company and profit its landlord. In this he was disappointed. Several large firms examined the site and expressed interest, but none located there." Though the effort was a failure, it is instructive that Pullman, in 1890, realized the one company town would be problematic in the new urban industrial order of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Despite the amenities offered at Pullman, and the company president's belief that he had isolated his workers from the outside world, the name "Pullman" is inextricably linked not with the emergence of city planning but with the violent labor unrest of the late 1800s. The unrest at Pullman began, ironically, in 1893, the year of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which drew thousands of visitors to Pullman's new model city. Under the surface of calm, however, labor unrest had begun to roil as wage cuts due to declining orders for sleeping cars brought hardship to many of the workers. As wages and hours were reduced, George Pullman made the strategically unsound decision to leave rents constant for the company owned houses. The Pullman Strike began on May 11, 1894, and would become nationalized that summer as a boycott on the handling of Pullman cars by members of the America Railway Union was instituted, essentially paralyzing rail traffic in twenty seven states and territories in the western half of the nation. Violence followed on the railroads, and Pullman became a touchstone of complaints by labor as the depression of the 1890s took hold. Federal troops were sent to Chicago to ensure order, and the strike ended on July 13 with no real
resolution of worker demands. The model company town of Pullman, however, had taken its place as one of the most egregious examples of industrial capital's paternalistic view of labor.

By the time of the first National Conference on City Planning in 1909, Pullman, that model industrial community of the 1890s, had faded from view and does not even rate a mention. Nevertheless, Pullman represents the beginning of a new phase in city planning, based on principles of corporate capitalism tempered with a large dollop of social responsibility. George Pullman believed that he could create a new environment that would improve the social and moral character of his workers. He would not be last to seek to satisfy this impulse through the creation of a new urban place.

**Vandergrift, Pennsylvania**

George McMurtry was an Irish immigrant who came to America as a teenager and achieved financial success in the iron and steel industry. In 1895, as President of Apollo Iron and Steel, McMurtry proposed the construction of a new city for his steel works. Located about forty miles northeast of Pittsburgh, the new city "...was to use the dual strategies of environmentalism and home ownership to ensure a loyal workforce." The site for the planned city of 1,000 families on the Kiskimenetas River was picturesque, as described in the town's hagiographic *Something Better than the Best*:

A wide sloping valley cradled at its base by a gentle river bend. Rolling hills blanketed in all directions with magnificent stands of oak. The river itself, swift and wild, flowing down from its sources below the foothills of the majestic Allegheny Mountain range to the east. Here, in this pristine setting of early American beauty, where only the soft swish of an occasional Indian paddle interrupted the scene, sat the backdrop for what was to become a 20th-century revolution of ideals between industry and social development. Here was a place
where the seeds of one man's dream of excellence found good ground, grew, and flourished into a century of opportunity known as Vandergrift.²⁷

McMurtry had traveled to Europe and visited planned industrial communities in both England and on the continent. From these visits, Mosher writes, he had "learned that these planned towns accented the importance of comprehensively planned infrastructure systems as well as adequate light and ventilation in both factory and home and that they were underpinned by the same environmentalist philosophy espoused by Olmsted, Sr. and other social reformers of the day."²⁸ In fact, McMurtry contracted with Olmsted to plan his new city, but by this time the elder Olmsted was in declining mental health, and the task fell to his stepson, John Olmsted, and Charles Eliot, recently graduated from Harvard University. The plan they proposed represents an interesting concept with numerous positive features. As Mosher writes:

For the next six months, Olmsted and Eliot worked from their Brookline, Massachusetts office on a town plan that was the embodiment of environmentalism. They wanted Vandergrift to create the impression that [Apollo Iron and Steel] workers lived along the thoroughfares of a romantic garden—not a steeltown. On top of an engineer's survey, they drew curvilinear streets and alleys that ran slightly askew to the natural contours so as to provide proper sewer and storm drainage. Single-family detached houses would be positioned on large 50’ by 120’ lots, and irregularly shaped parklets punctuated the street intersections. Olmsted and Eliot also expanded upon McMurtry's request for a public square. Drawing perhaps upon their intimate knowledge of the Court of Honor at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, they created a symmetrical and elongated 'Village Green' as the focus of the town.²⁹

Vandergrift did not experience the labor unrest that engulfed Pullman, possibly due to the introduction of homeownership into the model of the new industrial city. As Mosher writes: "By encouraging workers to become petty proprietors through homeownership, McMurty succeeded in aligning the goals of labor with those of capital and simultaneously inserted capital's power into the landscape via the inertial properties
of homeownership. Home-owning workers expressed little interest in striking or organizing so long as they held property or a mortgage on it...30

As a model of design, however, Vandergrift left much to be desired. Reps, in a scathing critique of the plan and its execution, writes: “Only half of the town was built as originally planned—that portion... containing the factory, business district, and ten or so residential blocks. Although the streets are well adapted to the hilly site, the plan as a drawing is much more impressive than when applied to the ground. The town has no central focus, no group of buildings that marks the center, nor are the curving streets particularly well suited for business use, however admirable they may be for residential purposes. It is not known to what extent the Olmsteds were inhibited in their design by the wishes of the company, but the results must be catalogued among the small number of inferior designs associated with the name of Olmsted.”31 Vandergrift does, however, maintain the sense of environmental quality sought by most company towns, and, by engaging the Olmsted firm in one of its first projects to plan a new city, draws professional planning forward towards the twentieth century.

**Gary, Indiana**

Despite their shortcomings, both Pullman and Vandergrift represent attempts to create a new urban environment for labor prior to the publication of Howard’s Garden City tract and the advent of Robinson’s City Beautiful. As these new ideas enter into city planning thought with the new century, they began to have an effect on the perception of the existing city as well as in the creation of new cities. However, the first major planned city of the new century, Gary, Indiana, draws only vaguely from
these new ideas, instead focusing on the creation of a vast, multipurpose urban industrial space that served the needs of its creator over the needs of the community.

Gary was laid out in 1907, in a rigid gridiron pattern on land owned by US Steel on the shore of Lake Michigan. The new city was located 28 miles from Chicago, and was centered around the huge steel mills that were to draw iron ore from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and coal from Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Residential lots in the new city were to be sold, and the buyers would be responsible for constructing houses, a marked contrast to the strong paternalism of Pullman and the somewhat less egregious paternalism of Vandergrift. However, in terms of design, as a speaker at the 1909 National Conference on City Planning noted, "... the residential portion of the town... bears the mark of having been conceived and laid out in respect to its general appointments by an engineer rather than an artist." In an embarrassed nod to the gathered planners, the speaker continued: "The city planner is bound... to be struck between the acme of present-day science exemplified in the organization of the industrial portion of Gary, as against the more or less conventional and commonplace organization of the residential portion. This celebrated steel city... affords a striking illustration of the urgent need for the American city planner."

Designed for an eventual population of 200,000 residents, in many ways the plan for Gary was a step backwards in the improvement of urban America, and appears devoid of the Garden City and City Beautiful aesthetic that would come to dominate planning during the Progressive Era. As Reps writes: "Gary itself remains indistinguishable in general character from hundreds of other industrial towns that grew largely without benefit of prior planning. U.S. Steel created a new industrial metropolis
on the Indiana dunes but failed sadly in its attempt to produce a community pattern noticeably different or better than elsewhere. In this largest of all the company towns of America the greatest opportunity was thus irrevocably lost. 34 Nevertheless, Gary’s rapid growth and ability to showcase and promote the success of this new urban industrial place, with affiliated industries locating in the city, afforded observers with a successful economic model on which to project their own dreams for industrial growth.

These company towns, coming at the cusp of a new century, represent an evolution in the efforts to reconfigure relations between labor and capital through the construction of a new space for these relations to subsist. The profession of planning was involved to varying degrees in these new places, though the resulting urban environments are markedly different. Representing an evolution from company towns towards satellite cities, these new communities continued to reflect the persistence of the paternalistic spirit of industrial capitalism at the turn of the century, and highlight, rather than resolve, the difficult relationship between labor and capital. As Reps writes: “One characteristic of company towns appears to have been widespread. This was the feeling, sometimes vague, sometimes strong, that the concept of a town in which an industry acted at the same time as employer, landlord, and governing agent somehow was contrary to American traditions. . . .” 35 Reps goes on to note that “The paradox is plain. Where the towns were built and managed in a spirit of paternalism, as at Pullman, the physical results might be pleasing but the towns lacked the sense of true communities in the social-political sense. On the other hand, where the companies did not attempt to dominate the social and political aspects of community life, as at Gary, the physical results were often deplorable.” 36
Forest Hills Gardens

The ideals of the Garden City and the City Beautiful so lacking at Gary were consciously inserted into the landscape of North America in the new community of Forest Hills Gardens. More a suburb than a new town, Ebenezer Howard would not have looked upon the small Long Island suburb of New York City as anything approaching his grand scheme for joining together the industrial and agricultural ways of life in a new urban form. Nevertheless, Forest Hills represents an important moment in the development of city planning in America.

Unlike the company towns of Pullman, Vandergrift, and Gary, Forest Hills was founded by a philanthropic organization, the Russell Sage Foundation. The Foundation was created in 1907 and committed itself in its charter "to the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States of America." Located in New York City, Rodgers describes the Russell Sage Foundation as an organization "... with its funds and fingers in pies ranging from public health and tuberculosis prevention to child labor and the promotion of city playgrounds, urban social surveys, low interest pawnshops, the condition of women's wage labor, tenement house regulation, folk schools for Appalachian mountaineers, the making of a regional plan for greater New York, and the construction of a model suburb at Forest Hills Gardens. ..." The Russell Sage Foundation was only one of an interlocking network of socially active private philanthropic organizations that stretched across the Atlantic to England and the continent, passing Progressive ideas back and forth and promoting social, economic, and political reform.
This bastion of social welfare spent nearly half its endowment on the development of Forest Hills Gardens. In 1909, the Foundation purchased 142 acres on Long Island and engaged the Olmsted firm to plan the site and renowned architect Grosvenor Atterbury to plan the buildings. The Foundation hoped "... to prove that careful planning and design of a real-estate subdivision could create for people of moderate means a community of top quality while making a reasonable financial return on the investment."

During its development, the Russell Sage Foundation firmly believed that it was constructing a community along the lines of Howard's Garden City. Writers of the period praised the new community as a Garden City: "... we must welcome most heartily an attempt like the Garden City at Forest Hills... to prove the importance of establishing a standard of beauty in town building." The overall design of the town is exemplary, focused on "Station Square," which has "somewhat the appearance of a medieval marketplace," surrounded by the Forest Hills Inn and a shopping arcade, all designed "... in a surprising combination of rough and smooth, concrete, brick, and steeply pitched roofs with flat red tiles."

The quality of overall design, the principles of environmental aesthetics, and the distinct architectural style sets Forest Hills apart from other new communities, establishing it as a model for the possible in the Progressive Era. It was hoped that communities such as Forest Hills could solve social problems, in particular the "housing problem," the rapid expansion of urban tenement and slum housing, that was seen to be at the core of much of society's ills. Atterbury, however, sensing the limitations of the new suburban community, warned: "To claim that garden suburbs and model towns
will cure all such ills would be carrying our simile of the patent-medicine label a little too far. There is some danger that the power for good manifestly inherent in this worldwide awakening to the social meaning and importance of living conditions may be seriously hampered by a too thoughtless acceptance of its first manifestations in the shape of so-called “model” towns and demonstrations of various kinds—proprietary, governmental, co-operative, or socialistic—as a cure-all for the body politic."43

Forest Hills is generally considered to be the first Garden City experiment in the United States, even though the community did not match Howard’s plan in many important respects, including the provision of industrial and agricultural activities. Moreover, the “Garden City for the Man of Moderate Means” never materialized, because “Only the middle class could afford its Tudor-style houses with spacious lawns.”44 As Newton writes: “Because of rising construction costs and amiable but expensive rivalry among individual home-builders, the income level of the population has been consistently higher than intended. Otherwise, especially considering how little precedent was available, the experiment must on the whole be adjudged a success, at least visually and sociologically, and in these respects a final chapter in the story of town planning.”45

Thus Forest Hills represents an experiment in planning that diverged from the company towns of Pullman, Vandergrift, and Gary. Its design undoubtedly draws upon the work of Howard as well as of the City Beautiful movement, with its broad landscaped boulevards, park spaces, and focus on a civic center. Nevertheless, Forest Hills, which “is justly regarded as one of the handsomest of American suburban areas.”46 is not a city but a suburb, suggesting that Howard’s ideas were incorporated

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into American planning into a suburban tradition rather than into a fully functioning
Garden City model. This has been the generally accepted view of planning history. In
the American South of the Progressive Era, however, the Garden City, with a significant
infusion of the City Beautiful aesthetic, became a model for city planning, as urban
entrepreneurs sought to draw industrial development to their communities as part of the
effort to build the New South.

Planning New Cities in the “New South”

The city is a relatively recent object of study in the American South. The South
has largely been associated with rural agrarian traditions that have little to do with the
processes of urbanization that have effected other regions of the country. As Brownell
and Goldfield noted in 1977, in the South, “where change has purportedly moved at the
pace of a mule through a tobacco row, the study of cities should afford some insight
into the character of the region. Yet the study of the urban South has proceeded much
more slowly than the fabled mule.”47 The authors add that “The traditional view of the
South as a ‘planter, plantation, staple crop, and the Negro, all set in a rural scene,’ or as
a region encumbered by an ‘agrarian, backward status,’ has militated against research in
southern urbanization.”48

Though the role of cities in Southern history has received more attention in
recent years, the prevailing view of Southern historiography is of the preeminence of
the plantation and the agrarian society in charting the course of the Southern
development.49 There is a rationale to this, however, as the differences of the South
from the rest of the country created a different pattern of urbanization, as noted by
Goldfield: “the southern city is different because the South is different. In that region,
the city is much closer to the plantation than it is to Chicago and New York. The study of the southern city requires an alteration in traditional views about rural-urban differences and about the distinction of the urban environment."\(^50\)

The city in the South, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, was much more closely tied to its surrounding agricultural hinterland, its "region" as Goldfield describes it, than were cities in other parts of America. Moreover, Goldfield notes that "Southern cites were ill served by their hinterlands. Cotton and tobacco were the two major staple crops of the South. Neither crop required significant marketing, storage, or processing that would generate urban growth and in turn other economic activities that would induce further growth."\(^51\) Thus, Southern urbanization at the dawn of the 1900s cannot be untangled from its rural hinterland. This is not to imply that cities in the South were by definition "backward;" in fact the leaders of southern cities were extraordinarily responsive to new technologies—witness the development of the electric streetcar in the South—and open to the progressive ideas then sweeping the country.\(^52\)

As the urban South matured, it became the engine for the creation of the "New South" that emerged in the latter decades of the 1800s and the early decades of the 1900s. Though in many ways the South was still dominated by agrarian interests, the New South was imbued with an urban vision, one that sought to draw together the old agricultural patterns of the South with the new industrial economy that was beginning to dominate the American landscape.

The "New South" is a concept freighted with meaning and ambiguity. Defining the South is relatively straightforward, incorporating the geographic region representing the eleven states of the old Confederacy. The attachment of "new" to this geographic

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region adds temporality and creates a construct of “New South” to which can be hung any number of philosophies, economic theories, and notions of historical and geographical change. The key question becomes what was “new” about the New South. As Woodward writes:

> It is not a place name, as in ‘New England,’ nor does it precisely designate a period, as does ‘the Confederacy.’ From the beginning it had the color of slogan, a rallying cry. It vaguely set apart those whose faith lay in the future from those whose heart was with the past. It suggested moods ranging from forthright recantation to an affable and uncritical optimism. It was invariably laden with a hopeful nationalism suggesting that the lately disaffected South was at last one in faith with the country—or would be as soon as a few more bonds were sold, another appropriation was passed, the depression was ended, or the new railroad was completed.”33

The New South, then, was founded on the shifting sands of slogan, faith, mood, and hope. Clearly the spirit of the New South was not geographically ubiquitous, but instead emerged strongly in selective pockets, largely tied to the strength of particular persons or classes of society who carried with them this faith and hope in the eventual progress of the South. Certain cities, such as Charlotte, Birmingham, Memphis, and especially Atlanta, came to exemplify this spirit of hope and progress. The beginning of the New South can be dated to the “redemption” of the South from the forces of Reconstruction after the election of 1876. The leaders of the New South were the local bankers, newspaper editors, lawyers, and real estate promoters who had their eyes fixed on local development as they worked to carve out a place for the South in the national economy by attracting industry, immigrants, and opportunity to their respective cities and towns. This group held strong and deeply felt middle class aspirations, as identified by Woodward: “Within the little islands of industrialism scattered through the region, including old towns as well as the new, was rising a new middle-class society. It drew

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some recruits from the old planter class, but in spirit as well as in outer aspect it was essentially new, strikingly resembling the same class in Midwestern and Northeastern cities.”

The apostles of the New South in the late 1800s, led by men like Atlanta Constitution editor Henry Grady, cast the South as a region of tremendous untapped potential. These apostles, imbued with faith and hope, took on leadership roles in their respective communities and in some cases in their various states. These men—and generally they were males—sought to reshape both the economic and by extension the moral climate of the South, with the nebulous idea of “progress” as their talisman and a new economic and social order as their eventual goal. As Doyle writes: “The New South movement that gathered full power in the 1880s was the product of this ascendant business class of merchants, financiers, and industrialist and their allies, particularly those in the press. Through this program, business leaders proposed an agenda for economic development and social uplift that cast them in preeminent roles as architects of the new order. As such they held up their factories and railroads, their cities, and, above all, their own lives as models for the South to emulate.”

Much of the impetus for the creation of the New South spilled over into the emerging Progressivism of the early twentieth century. Wiebe contends that this progressive spirit was independent from the reform movements of the urban east.

Out of the disruptions of the late nineteenth century, a number of men on the farms and in the towns and smaller cities had gradually built stable careers around the new modes of distribution and finance. Slowed by the uncertainties of the late eighties and nineties, they had suddenly found themselves in highly advantageous positions around 1900. They were prospering, and tomorrow’s promise now seemed exceptionally bright. These merchants and commercial
farmers, bankers and lawyers, promoters and editors—men whose success was rooted in their own areas even as it drew them far into a national society—constituted an indigenous socioeconomic power that [the South] had not known in any strength since the full-scale arrival of the railroads. Like the urban progressives, they were taking a calculated second look at the world around them.\(^{56}\)

Southern progressives, then, were drawn from "the ranks of... lawyers, editors, ministers, doctors, businessmen, agricultural scientists, demonstration agents, directors of the Young Men’s Christian Association and young Women’s Christian Association, railroad commission experts, [and] legislative lobbyists,"\(^{57}\) many of the same people who supported the development goals embodied in the New South, pushed by the changing economics of the new century. As Grantham writes: "The origins of the progressive impulse in the South can be found in a confluence of internal and external developments in the late nineteenth century. Perhaps the most fundamental of these dynamics were changes in the economic and social landscape of the region, particularly the coming of industry, increasing urbanization, and the growing importance of a new middle class made up of business and professional elements."\(^{58}\) The new economic and social landscape, therefore, meant that "Southern progressives assumed that social distress could be ameliorated or prevented through economic development. Keenly aware of their section’s pervasive poverty and of its dependence on outside developers and capital, they embraced the New South creed of industrial growth and economic diversification."\(^{59}\)

In terms of new development, one of the first industries to take advantage of this new economic and social order and which would profoundly reshape the settlement landscape of the South was the textile industry. The promotion of the textile industry in the South took on a missionary spirit, viewed as the savior of the benighted region by
New South promoters. The lure of the textile mill was particularly strong in the Southeast, drawn by high returns on investment as well as a cheap and tractable labor force. Woodward adds, however, that, “As important as these inducements undoubtedly were, they cannot account for the public zeal that, in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Alabama, converted an economic developing into a civic crusade inspired with a vision of social salvation. Not only did this process occur in cities like Charleston, Atlanta, and Charlotte, with their efficient chambers of commerce, big newspapers, and northern visitors and settlers, but even more typically in isolated Piedmont towns. Old market villages of a few hundred citizens that had drowsed from one Saturday to the next since the eighteenth century, were suddenly aflame with the mill fever and ‘a passion for rehabilitation.’”

The textile mill town was the primary form by which industrial capital inserted itself into the South. Mill towns essentially followed the company town model of New England, and like New England, many of the Southern mill villages were ramshackle in appearance and lacked most amenities. Mill towns, which could be positioned adjacent to existing cities, creating a one-industry industrial district, or could be situated at some distance from other communities, were a particularly common sight in the upcountry South, though coastal cities as well tried mightily to attract the investment associated with the mills. Thus, after the period of Reconstruction, the mill town served as the gateway to an urban way of life for a significant Southern population, drawn from their scattered and isolated farmsteads to the looms and spindles of the factory. In other parts of the South, the sawmill town would take on the function of the urban gateway.
providing opportunities to families not available on the farmstead, albeit in an even more ramshackle and economically tenuous environment.61

As agriculture in the Piedmont South became increasingly difficult, dominated as it was by the sharecrop system and buffeted by unstable market conditions, the mill towns would grow increasingly attractive. As Carlton notes with regards to South Carolina's changing economy, but which also applied to much of the South in the late 1800s:

... the pattern that merged was completely new, the product of the vastly altered circumstances of the postwar South. The most immediate and drastic change was the transformation of black slaves into free workers, which necessitated a radical reorganization of southern agriculture. Out of the chaos of the postwar southern countryside emerged a new labor system, in which work in gangs on large-scale productive units was largely abandoned in favor of sharecropping or tenant farming. While landholding remained as concentrated as it had been before the war, the product units in the old plantation regions came to be split up into family sized farms. As a result, a new class of local merchants arose in the old staple-producing regions to supply goods to freedmen and white farmers and help market the local cotton production.62

Carlton goes on the note that, for this emerging merchant class, many of whom would form the backbone of the New South movement, "Their power was based on the desperate need of most rural southerners for agricultural credit; since any merchant, to operate, either had to have capital of his own or access to capital in the North, the new storekeepers became the principal financiers of the countryside. The development of the crop-lien system, given legal sanction in 1866, formalized the new merchant dominion; the continuing postbellum stagnation of southern agriculture, due both to changes in the labor system and to slackening in the growth of world demand for cotton, helped maintain it."63 As the authors of Like a Family make clear, "Taken together, the crop lien, fence laws, and higher taxes added up to a virtual assault on piedmont
yeoman society and eroded agricultural self-sufficiency. Farmers who were once participants in a system of direct exchange of goods and services among producers increasingly became participants in a rural economy dominated by merchants and cash exchange. . . . As conditions deteriorated, yeomen and tenants limped along from year to year, burdened by debt and pressed by merchants.”64

This transformation of rural society, characterized as an “assault on yeoman society,” set the stage for the industrialization of the South, providing a workforce upon which the New South could be built. As Hall et.al. note: “The rise of industrial capitalism in the postbellum South went hand in hand with the transformation of agriculture. The same conditions that crippled farmers feathered the nests of many merchants and breathed life into the small towns where they made their homes. By the 1880s merchants with money to invest were backing mill construction. This accumulation of capital coincided with a new southern ethos that equated progress with industrialization. Small-town elites fell captive to a dream of individual gain and community prosperity. Towns vied for the railroad lines and mills that promised to quicken the pulse of commerce. . . .”65

Significant portions of the South were transformed by the mill and its surrounding town, which enframed nearly every aspect of existence to the rhythms of the factory. The industrial workforce in the South was more tightly bound to the company than in other regions of the United States:

At the turn of the century 92 percent of southern textile families lived in villages owned by the men who gave them work. For these people, perhaps more than for any other industrial work force, the company town established the contours of everyday existence. It was not only a place to work and earn a living; it was also the setting in which men and women fell in love, married, reared their children, and retired in old age. Within the village, millhands created a new way
of life by adapting their rural heritage to the unfamiliar realities of industrial labor.\textsuperscript{66}

Most of the mill towns built during the latter decades of the nineteenth and early twentieth century were laid out by company engineers who did not bring with them town planning experience. Most mill towns, then, employed the tried and true grid layout, with little or no provision for amenities such as parks or open spaces. The morphology of most mill towns was one of depressing sameness, with small frame houses pushed up close together and fronting on generally unpaved streets. Provisions were generally made in the plan for a small commercial center, which might include a company store, a health clinic, a school, a church, and possibly a company office for handling payroll and other financial matters. On the edge of the Southern mill town would be an even more ramshackle collection of houses for African American workers in the mill, restricted from living within the town proper. And always dominating the landscape was the looming presence of the mill, whether situated towards the center of town or off to one side, its brick exterior standing in stark contrast to the clapboard houses, its piercing whistle able to be heard throughout the community, setting the cycle of life throughout the community. Though life may have been difficult in a mill town, generally the houses were provisioned with amenities like electricity and running water, and there was social contact, a feature often lacking on many of the isolated farms of the South.

Despite the rush of textile mills and the accompanying company towns to the South, it remained a predominantly rural and agrarian region. As Woodward writes: “The fact of the matter was that, in spite of the spectacular rise of completely new cities in an old section of the country and the growth of many old ones in the last two decades

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of the century, the sum total of urbanization in the South was comparatively
unimportant. . . . The Southern people remained, throughout the rise of the ‘New
South,’ overwhelmingly a country people, by far the most rural section of the Union."67
Thus for the leaders of the New South, the agricultural sector remained an important
and in many ways problematic sector of the economy, which was still so dependent on
cotton and based on a crop lien system that kept much of the South largely
demonetized. A new model of salvation needed to be found, one in which the new
profession of planning, with its progressive spirit founded in both Garden City and City
Beautiful ideals, could make a significant contribution to the quality of life of both the
factory worker and the farmer in the South.

It is difficult to determine the advent of professional planning in the South.
There is little evidence that A. J. Downing created landscapes in the South, though he
was clearly aware of the extensive gardens on many of the larger plantations of the
region before the ravages of the Civil War. He also may have hoped to eventually work
in the South, and in his classic The Architecture of Country Houses, published just two
years before his tragic death at 37, he included a design for "A Villa in the Romanesque
Style, for the Middle or Southern States."68 Horticulturists like Phillipe Noisette, who
had a nursery north of Charleston, William Summer of Pomaria Nursery in South
Carolina, and P. J. Berckmans of Fruitlands Nursery in Georgia were involved in
providing plant material for the gardens of the plantation owners.69 The landscape
planning, however, was for the most part done by the owner and his spouse, heavily
influenced by family trips to England or the European continent from which they drew
inspiration for their home grounds.

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The first large project in the South involving a landscape architect can be dated to Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.’s work, beginning in 1888, at George Vanderbilt’s sprawling Biltmore estate. Nestled in the forested mountains outside of Asheville, North Carolina, this estate garnered tremendous publicity throughout the South and the nation, and opened the South up to the possibilities of planning:

Biltmore, in the form it eventually took, might have been considered a callous anomaly; it was a regal estate, with French Renaissance chateau, gardens, and dependencies, set down in a mountainous region of rural America, and poor rural America at that. In its prime, it was the grandest country place in the United States. Yet it was more than a stately pleasure dome; a product of Olmsted’s double-edged genius, it justified itself artistically as a superb piece of landscape design and socially as the first large experiment in America in practical forestry.  

Professional planning in the South based on the principles of landscape architecture, then, can trace its roots to the massive estate at Biltmore. Olmsted, whose health would fail in 1895, completed only one other major project in the South, the Atlanta suburb of Druid Hills, which represents one of the earliest professionally planned suburbs in the South. Due to financial difficulties of the owner, however, work on this project did not begin until around 1905 and was led by John Charles Olmsted.  

After the passing of Olmsted, another major innovative planner, John Nolen, would become heavily involved early in the twentieth century in planning work in the South. with one of his first professional projects a plan for a park in Savannah in 1905.

As planning evolved, drawing upon the aesthetics of the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements, planners would become involved in the New South project of economic revival through the development of new and experimental satellite cities engaged in industrial and agricultural activities. Before the involvement of professional planners, however, the South would have an indigenous model on which to draw, the
city of Anniston, Alabama, planned and constructed in 1872. Nearly forty years after Anniston’s founding the model of the Southern industrial satellite city would be further refined at Fairfield, Alabama. Together, these two cities provide the framework from which emerges the New South satellite city, the urban form that would come to embody many of the hopes and dreams of the New South propagandists into the Progressive Era and beyond.

**Anniston, Alabama**

As a part of the New South, Alabama was a leader in the founding of new cities. The first of these new communities was Anniston, established in 1872 by the Woodstock Iron Company. This company, which represented a partnership of the Noble family of Alabama by way of England and the Tyler family of Charleston, founded Anniston to take advantage of the rich iron ore deposits of northeastern Alabama. This pig iron was primarily used in making railroad car wheels, which is what first drew together the Noble family, which had iron ore, and the Tyler family, which was connected to the South Carolina Railroad. 72

The company town of Anniston was essentially built on top of the iron ore deposit. All the property was owned by the company, and life was dominated by the iron works: “The company owned or controlled most of the land in the city limits, as well as part of the timber lands in the surrounding hills that furnished charcoal for the iron making. The town became virtually self-sufficient, and all the business was solely that of the company. The company property was even fenced.”73

The new city of Anniston had numerous planned features that made it stand out from the mill villages then springing up throughout the South. The streets, laid out in a
gridiron, were ". . . surveyed, graded, and then macadamized . . . by covering them first with crushed slag from the furnace, then rolling them to a smooth hard surface."74 In terms of amenities, "Samuel Noble supervised the laying out of parks, which were planted in bluegrass with evergreens and roses."75 The new city also included the first application of electric street lighting in Alabama. Quality homes for the workers were constructed by the company, with "Each dwelling . . . placed on a quarter acre lot, with space for flowers and vegetables."76

In addition, Anniston included a significant reliance on the surrounding agricultural region for food. As Gates writes: "In order to feed the employees, the company constructed a steam-operated flour mill and a butcher shop. Since the quality of meats and the means of preparing it were both thought to be important, the proprietors brought an experienced butcher from the North. The scattered farmers who lived in the nearby Choccolocco valley were encouraged to produce for the town. An isolated, largely undeveloped, unproductive area in northeast Alabama was transformed into ‘blossoming fields’ with the coming of the Woodstock enterprise."77 In addition, thirty years prior to Ebenezer Howard’s description of model farms associated with the Garden City, the company established a farm which ". . . provided a pattern for agricultural production with a model farm and dairy. . . . The company farm was eminently successful in helping to make Anniston self-sustaining. . . ."78

Anniston, then, provides an early model for urban experimentation for the New South, which combined both the industrial sector and the agricultural sector in a fully functioning, self-sustaining city. As Anniston grew, new industries moved in, transforming the company town to a satellite city in which the grip of the Woodstock
Company loosened. As Woodward summarized: "Anniston: conceived two years after Birmingham and laid off along the rows of an abandoned cotton farm, planned and built by Samuel Noble, an Englishman. The very type of paternalistic industrialism, Anniston was owned almost entirely by the members of two families, the Nobles and the Tylers, until 1883. When property was formally opened to public sale for the first time that year, Anniston already had a population of 4,000, three blast furnaces, a cotton mill, carwheel works, rolling mills, and a freight-car factory, along with churches and schools." This diversification would help to pull the new city through the difficult times of the 1890s, as the Woodstock Company struggled through a variety of permutations involving Northern as well as foreign ownership. Despite the problems of the parent company, Anniston was labeled as a "model" city for the development of the New South, under banner headlines in newspapers like the Atlanta Constitution trumpeting "Anniston, the Wonderful Alabama Town, Its Industries and Enterprising Owners." Anniston, however, was not a "satellite" of an existing city but instead of the rich iron ore deposits of eastern Alabama. Still, with its combination of industrial and agricultural activities in a bold new urban enterprise, Anniston provided an alternative model of development for the apostles of the New South.

Fairfield, Alabama

Much better known in terms of city planning history is Fairfield, Alabama. Founded in 1910 outside Birmingham, which was a crucible of urban industrialization from its founding in the 1870s, Fairfield represents the second major new city project in the South. Fairfield garnered tremendous attention not so much for the quality of its design, which actually leaves much to be desired, but for the participation of a
professionally trained landscape architect, George Miller from Boston. This appears to represent the first work of a professional planner in a new urban industrial satellite city in the South.

Coming on the heels of the first National Conference on City Planning, Fairfield incorporates many of the design features espoused by the Garden City and City Beautiful movements. The initial design and implementation of Fairfield stands in stark contrast to nearby towns, as Taylor as early as 1915 recognized: "Contrasting sharply with [nearby mill towns] Avondale and Ensley, dismal civic expressions of the earlier industrialism, is the town of Fairfield. It is doubtful whether there is to be found in America a better planned industrial community. In comparison with its application of modern town planning methods the under-appreciation of the big opportunity at Gary stands out most glaringly."

The site was initially to be developed by Robert Jemison. Jr., owner of Jemison Real Estate and Insurance Company. After the announcement by Jemison of his new venture, however, the development was quickly swept up by the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, which had recently been acquired by U. S. Steel. The steel company contracted with Jemison, who had engaged Miller to design his new city, to manage the planning and construction of the new city. Miller clearly felt great admiration for the efforts of Jemison, calling him a "...public-spirited real estate developer, [who] took hold of the project with a firm decision to make a model town. He studied the problem in its various aspects, traveled widely, and acquainted himself with what had been done both here and abroad. ... In less than one year $1,000,000 was expended on
improvements, and conditions were provided which already have had a marked influence on local standards.\textsuperscript{82} 

As has been noted, planning for Fairfield incorporated many of the ideas then sweeping through Progressive thought, incorporating a new view towards housing, streets, civic centers, and community amenities. As the Fairfield's planner notes: "The physical town scheme has proven a good demonstration of city planning. It provides different kinds of thoroughfares and secondary streets, designed for their different specific uses and permitting of expansion, it provides public parks and playgrounds, sites for public and semi-public buildings, and it regulates the character of development on private lands, all in one comprehensive, correlated, unified scheme which meets its purpose and takes advantage of existing conditions."\textsuperscript{83} The greatest improvement over new cities such as Gary, however, was the formal central focus, which "appears as a plaza reached from the railroad by a broad street, with a group of civic buildings in a parklike setting beyond."\textsuperscript{84} The civic center, an important element in both the Garden City and the City Beautiful aesthetic, is clearly brought into planning of the industrial city of Fairfield.

Another innovative feature of Fairfield is the plan which, as was stated above, "regulates the character of development on private land." This recognition at Fairfield that private use of land required regulation suggests a familiarity by both Miller and Jemison of Howard's Garden City principles which called for clearly separated land uses. The zoning scheme at Fairfield was fairly complex and comprehensive, addressing every lot in the new city: "Fairfield has a zoning scheme which determines the general use of private lands, that is, lands for business of different characters, some
being confined to the two main business streets, while others dealing in bulky materials are confined to lots adjacent to the property of railroad and large industries. In addition, the plan of Fairfield incorporated residential zoning, implanting a class structure in the planned city: “The residential section is divided into four main zones with subdivisions; again, these zones determine the minimum cost of house that can be built in each and restrictions are framed accordingly.”

Another aspect of residential zoning at Fairfield involved segregation of the African American population. At Anniston, founded forty years earlier, the white and black populations were not physically or spatially separated. As Gates notes, “In the early city, it was not uncommon for blacks and whites to live side by side, sometimes in the same boarding houses. Occupational rather than racial segregation characterized the community. . . .” The African American business community in Anniston even sought to open a textile mill in the 1890s, though the project founders during the severe depression of that decade. There was a sense, according to Gates, of realization by the white residents of Anniston that the black community needed to be treated with respect: “Politically and economically the black community struggled during the latter years of the nineteenth century to achieve a measure of success as a separate entity. The white citizens, however, were quicker to recognize the interdependence of the two races: the white race needed the labor of the blacks, and the black race was financially dependent on the white.”

In Fairfield, however the situation was very different, representing the reality of creating a new industrial city in the era of emerging spatial segregation as “Jim Crow” laws gained strength across the South. As Taylor notes in his otherwise laudatory
description of Fairfield: “The failure to provide for the housing needs of the unskilled also concerns the negroes, who supply a considerable proportion of such labor. Fairfield itself is shut against negroes; the very first restriction applying to each lot reads that ‘said lot shall be used by white persons only, except that any servants employed on the premises may occupy servants’ houses.’ But just over the city line from Fairfield are clusters of negro shanties which make an unkempt and squalid contrast with the town itself.” The rigid system of segregation that began in the 1890s and would be firmly in place throughout the Progressive Era was becoming institutionalized in the new industrial cities of the New South.

A more positive feature of Fairfield involved housing, which was constructed by a variety of interests, including the Jemison Company, Birmingham investors, and the industrial operations located in the new city. Much of the housing was sold to the employees, freeing the workforce from the paternalism plaguing the mill towns of the South. The houses were generally of the bungalow type, and the yards were designed to provide recreational as well as gardening opportunities. As Miller writes: “...without attempting to be paternalistic, the land company built many model cottages of the detached type, and these are particularly designed in connection with the arrangement of outdoor features on each lot. the front yard fitting to the street scheme, the backyard to suggest selfish, health-giving use. There have been defined kitchen and laundry yards, flower walks, playground areas for small children, or vegetable gardens.” In a likely nod towards Howard’s Garden City plan, Miller lauds the possibilities of agricultural in the planned industrial city: “In an adjacent town [to Fairfield], through a system developed by one industrial concern, there was $30,000 worth of vegetables

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raised in backyard gardens in one year. Few people realize that if only about three-quarters of the six million industrial employees in the United States had the backyard gardens which these examples at Fairfield permit, the value of produce would be over $360,000,000 annually. “

In an extensive and thoroughly documented 1939 report to Congress on planned communities the Urbanism Committee of the National Resources Committee found much to criticize about the plan of Fairfield, including its overabundance of commercial space, its cumbersome street plan, and residential segregation. Still, as a planned industrial city they believed that the overall result was successful. As the authors of the report, Arthur C. Comey and Max S Wehrly, wrote: “In general, it may be said that, in spite of the defects which were inherent in the original plan and the subsequent development, Fairfield represents a successful attempt at providing a community for a specific purpose. The fact that the Tennessee Coal and Iron Co. has had a labor turnover not exceeding seven-tenths of 1 percent over the last 6-year period is an indication of this success. In addition, the community has functioned largely without subsidy, and much of the enhanced land values created by the establishment of the city were realized by outside interests.” Thus all the economic return in establishing Fairfield did not accrue simply to the original founding enterprise but to other industrial and commercial ventures as they built the city, a primary difference between a company town and an industrial city.

Fairfield represents a watershed in New South city planning, incorporating as it did much of modern planning thought as applied by a knowledgeable professional and aided and abetted by a progressive entrepreneur. The development of Fairfield would

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lay the foundation for other new cities in the New South, as local leaders searched for the key to economic prosperity for their own communities. Fairfield, however, because of its renown, would appear to planning historians as somewhat of an anomaly in city planning, rather than a part of a larger fabric of new industrial cities in the New South that drew upon both Fairfield and Anniston as models. These cities would provide a model for the evolution of new industrial cities in the South, as the New South searched for economic redemption to accompany what was perceived by the white urban progressives as the political redemption of the 1870s.

Anniston and Fairfield represent the insertion of capital into new city building in the New South, and taken together herald the evolution of an urban form into a characteristically variegated urban space, drawing upon modern planning techniques. The New South would become an active region in terms of founding new industrial cities during the Progressive Era, and in terms of form and function these new cities would stand in sharp contrast to the textile mill towns popping up across the South landscape. The new industrial cities of the South, however, would have unique characteristics that set them apart from new cities in other regions, particularly in its effort to draw together the industrial and the agriculture sectors in a new urban form that would be seen as a wagon on which to hitch the star of economic progress.

The development of these new industrial cities, or New South Garden Cities, during the Progressive Era will be examined by tracing the historical and geographical development of one place—North Charleston—which in many ways fully articulates the model of the New South Garden City. North Charleston will then be placed in an historical and geographical context with other new industrial cities in the South during
the Progressive Era and afterwards to gain a fuller understanding of the development of
the South, which employed this new model to spur prosperity in this struggling but
optimistic region.

The Garden City Comes to America

The profession of planning and the creation of new towns associated with it
emerged during the first decades of the twentieth century as part of the broad effort
described by Wiebe to bring order to an increasingly disordered world, separated from
the sense of community that had bound society together in earlier times. As Wiebe
writes: "... the new scheme was derived from the regulative, hierarchical needs of
urban-industrial life. Through rules with impersonal sanctions, it sought continuity and
predictability in a world of endless change." Planning would help to bring "order and
continuity" to the city through rationalization of the physical landscape by well-trained
professionals, drawing on modern techniques of design and implementation.

The city of the Progressive Era, then, would be a new city, one in which order
would be maintained, but also art would be expressed. As Howe, a leading advocate of
planning, noted in 1913: "In a big way, city planning is the first conscious recognition
of the unity of society. It involves a socializing of art and beauty and the control of the
unrestrained license of the individual. It enlarges the power of the State to include the
things men own as well as the men themselves, and widens the idea of sovereignty so as
to protect the community from him who abuses the rights of property, as it now protects
the community from him who abuses his personal freedom." "City planning..." Howe
continues, "involves a new vision of the city. It means a city built by experts, by
experts in architecture, in landscape gardening, in engineering, and housing, by students
of health, sanitation, transportation, water, gas, and electricity supply; by a new type of
municipal officials who visualize the complex life of a million people as the builders of
an earlier age visualized an individual home. It involves new terms, a wider outlook,
and the co-ordination of urban life in all its relationships.\textsuperscript{95}

City planning was a part of a larger picture of societal shifts during the
Progressive Era, as the city stood buffeted by the forces of unbridled industrial
capitalism, giving rise to an examination of not only urban form, but also the
functioning of this new realm which harbored an increasing share of humanity. As
Rodgers notes:

It was central to the progressive temperament... to see social politics in terms of
form as well as function. That the core values of a society should be written in
its street designs and public buildings, its shelters and its cityscapes, was a
conviction deep in progressive culture on both sides of the Atlantic. The cities
in the mind's eye of progressives materialized in civic centers and zoning maps
as fully as in public waterworks and streetcars. 'Beauty' was their passion... But it was not beauty that fired their passions per se as much as the possibility of
conscious design: of impressing publicly chosen order on the city's immense,
diffuse market in land, location, and building style. From the first stirring of the
city planning idea, through the community building projects of New Dealers and
European social democrats, the vision of communities that not only owned their
own infrastructure but also shaped their own design was a powerful presence in
progressive social politics.\textsuperscript{96}

As has been noted, according to many views of the development of planning
during this period, the City Beautiful of the first decade of the 1900s gave way to the
City Practical, and the Garden City, which had its first experimental outing in the
United States at Forest Hills, would not reemerge until the founding of Radburn, New
Jersey in 1927. As Wiebe notes, "... [after 1910] civic reformers gradually replaced
the City Beautiful, balanced and orderly, with the goal of the City Useful, harnessing
energies to serve fluctuating need."\textsuperscript{97} These "needs" tended to orbit around the
provision of adequate housing as the solution to the ills of urban society, with reformers such as Lawrence Veiller, supported by the Russell Sage Foundation, creating organizations like the National Housing Association. These reformers showed little interest in Howard's Garden City as a solution to the problems of the city, instead pushing for housing reform in typically American fashion, advancing technical solutions to the problems such as regulation while decrying the practicability of public housing. As Scott writes: “Only local government, Veiller maintained, should concern itself with housing, and then, at most, to enforce tenement-house regulations, restrict the height of buildings, lay out street systems conducive to the construction of multifamily structures two rooms deep, and control the use of land in various parts of the city.”

According to this reading of the emergence of planning during the Progressive Era, the discipline bifurcated into a social reform branch, involved in large regional and comprehensive planning which examined the city within a social problems framework, and a much smaller urban design branch, withering as the push for large scale projects of municipal beautification or the bold creation of new Garden Cities receded into the distance. As Lubove, in his history of housing and planning during the Progressive Era, notes: “The Garden City, a formidable undertaking, made little progress in the United States. Americans tended to emphasize the more limited ‘garden suburb’ as better suited to immediate, widespread application.” In this view, “The era of professional planning, particularly by the 1920s, was marked by a gradual transformation of the planners’ role from reformer to technician.”

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Rodgers, in his study of the connections between reform impulses on both sides of the Atlantic, notes the selectivity of ideas—such as the Garden City—crossing the Atlantic. In his characteristically vibrant phraseology, Rodgers writes “Their noses pressed against the glass of other nations’ experience, American civic progressives brought home, one by one, devices for more deliberate city building. . . . In the decade before the First World War, the learning had gone on extremely quickly and the optimism was intense.”

Rodgers adds that “Coming late to the discussions and techniques being generated abroad did not discourage the American civic progressives: it gave them the chance to stand on the shoulders of the ‘civilized’ world’s experience.” Rodgers notes, however, that this exchange of new urban ideas and ideals was far from perfect, due largely to the fact that “the Atlantic progressive connection functioned as a highly selective membrane, strikingly permeable in some areas, all but impenetrable in others. Proposals passed across its boundaries as if through a complicated array of grids and filters. Precedents were not merely exchanged; they were sifted, winnowed, extracted from context, blocked, transformed, and exaggerated.”

Rodgers attributes this filtering of the exchange of city planning ideas to a variety of causes. He writes that “In the American case, where accustomed rights of property were so sharply at stake, interests and ideology played heavily into the selectivity of the exchange. So did the now familiar issues of timing, inertia, precedent, and preemption.” In terms of the Garden City, Rodgers sees little in the way of successful transfer during the years before the coming of the First World War, noting that “The Garden City of Association of America, founded contemporaneously with its
German and French counterparts by a combination of social gospel ministers, city planners, and investors in Long Island land and railroad stock, evaporated in the financial panic of 1907; the Russell Sage Foundation’s Forest Hills Gardens Project, a victim of the same inflationary pressure that sabotaged the Massachusetts state experiment in Lowell, ended at a substantial loss.106

There is considerable evidence, however, of a more successful transfer of ideas associated with the Garden City, and with the persistence of the ideals of the City Beautiful, than is commonly believed. The aesthetic and design elements of planning, though undermined by the City Practical, remained a strong countercurrent to the increasingly technically oriented profession, carrying with it ideals and principles from both the City Beautiful and the Garden City movements. Comprehensive plans such as the Burnham Plan for Chicago, Nolen’s plan for San Diego, as well as plans for St. Louis and Atlanta, all of which were influenced by the City Beautiful aesthetic, suggest the resilience of Robertson’s urban ideal.107 In addition, the founding of new industrial cities in the west such as Torrence, California in 1913108 and Atascadero109 in the same year, both of which claim a heritage embedded in Howard’s Garden City plan and in their designs draw heavily from the ideals of the City Beautiful, are indicative of the movement of Howard’s vision to the American side of the Atlantic. Atascadero in particular drew heavily on Howard’s vision of a marriage between the industrial and agricultural economies.

A further indication of the impress of Howard’s ideas on the American consciousness during the Progressive Era is the attention given to the Garden City movement by the United States Congress in 1917. The US Congress held a hearing on
February 9, 1917, under a resolution which read in part: “Whereas thousands of American citizens have petitioned Members of Congress for an investigation of the movement both in Europe and the United States; Therefore be it resolved, That the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry be authorized and requested to hear and consider such testimony as may be produced before said committee in Washington regarding this movement both in Europe, in the United States, and elsewhere, and to report its findings to the Senate.” At this hearing, which heard testimony from Richard B. Watrous, secretary of the American Civic Association, and William T. Love of Lomax, Illinois, the Senators listened attentively and were clearly aware of the broad outline of Howard’s Garden City program.

Based on the testimony and the comments by the Senators, the US Senate was actively considering funding new Garden Cities in this country along the lines of those developed in England. The Senators were clearly interested in the idea of healthful urban living, as shown by this exchange concerning healthy children in England’s Garden Cities:

Senator Gronna: May I ask you, were these children in the city the children of wage workers, as I take it that the children of Port Sunlight were?
Mr. Watrous: Yes, sir.
Senator Gronna: Were the children in the city that you make the comparison with of the same class?
Mr. Watrous: Of the same class; wage earners and working in city factories.
Senator Gronna: I suppose they were all English people, of the same nationality and the same class?
Mr. Watrous: Yes, sir.
Senator Gronna: Your idea is then that the fresh air which they enjoyed out in the outlying districts of the city and their mode of living gave them the advantage and they thrived better and grew larger and stronger?
Mr. Watrous: Yes, sir; it had that beneficial effect.111

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Mr. Watrous was also firm in his belief that some sort of new urban form had to be found to address the problems of the city: “We regard this movement in the United States as one of the most important things now before us in connection with the industrial development. It is growing more and more apparent that the large employer of labor must do things that many years ago he did not think he had to do to contribute to the comfort and good health of his employees.”

Towards the close of his testimony, Mr. Watrous clearly supported further investigation of the Garden City movement: “I want to say, Senator, that we in the association are greatly impressed with the purpose of this resolution, and I sincerely hope—and in this I have the cooperation of the men who are most interested in the garden city movement—that this resolution will be favorably considered by the Senate, and that a committee may be created, with necessary funds at its command to make a very broad and comprehensive study of this whole question in all parts of the country.”

Mr. Love’s testimony was grounded in his own efforts—unsuccessful, as it would turn out—to create a Garden City with a population of several thousand at Lomax, ten miles south of Burlington on the banks of the Mississippi River. As he stated to his audience: “Our movement, Senators, is somewhat different from that which Mr. Watrous has described, although to a certain extent both aim at similar results. From the industrial viewpoint, the increased efficiency of the workingman and the better housing of the workingman as an aid to industry are results produced by the garden city; but our aim, while including these benefits, is broader and more sociological. Our idea is to look more to the benefit of the individual, and to the greater benefit of the country, through the creation of better citizens.” Mr. Love further
developed his ideas for the Senators, describing a new type of community drawing on both the industrial and the agricultural sectors of the economy:

When we come to a reasonable distance from the center of our city we will acquire the lands along roads surveyed and laid out by engineers who will seek low grades and the shortest distances between centers of population, just as for a railroad line. We will then acquire the land on each side of these roads three-quarters of a mile to a mile in width. Then instead of laying out farms with a frontage of a quarter of a mile to a mile or more, imposing upon the farmer the burden of building and keeping up that length of road, we would divide this territory into many narrow-frontage farms—some of them as small as 50 feet wide, and from that up to 200 to 300 feet frontage.

Then on such a road we will put the interurban railway that will serve this town and other towns. It will be put in a fenced-in right of way, so that there may be speed as well as service. Alongside of this there will be the paved wagon and automobile track, and on each side the footways or sidewalks. It will be a ‘village street’ from one town to another. Where there are so many people served along the road, you can have all the public utilities that you could have in a tow. We will thus extend our city into the country and bring the country into the city. . . .

The Senators were very receptive to his ideas concerning the urban industrial and agricultural relationship embodied in Howard’s plan, as shown in this exchange:

Senator Gronna: Yes; I agree entirely with you that to bring this about would be not only satisfactory, but a Godsend to the people who live in these congested cities, but I want to be sure that we do not confuse commercial farming with these residential districts, as I call them. I do not think any man could sustain his position when he says that you can take a farm such as you have described and make a living just out of that farm . . .

Mr. Love: Senator, you do not get my entire idea; I have not gone far enough to make it clear.

Senator Gronna: Pardon me for interrupting you. I am very much interested.

Mr. Love: Take these roads radiating from a city, the farther you get away from the city the greater will be the intervening distances. Here, some distance from the city, there could be the small farms fronting the roadway, and back of them, but with a narrow frontage on the road, the larger farms for wheat, corn, cattle raising, and other large farming operations, the farms of larger magnitude. . . .

In the course of the testimony, discussion turned to financing, in which the communal ownership embodied in the principles of Howard’s Garden City was

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discussed, as well as the idea of public housing as found in Europe. The following exchange illustrates the impact of these new ideas during the Progressive Era:

Senator Sheppard: Have municipalities undertaken anything of that kind so far in this country?

Mr. Watrous: There was announced, Senator, a few years ago a very interesting attempt on the part of one municipality, and the city in that case was Cleveland, and the mayor was Newton D. Baker, our present Secretary of War. They had quite an elaborate plan there for the purchase of property for the building of houses and their rental or sale to the people of Cleveland. I think that rather fell through because of some opposition on the part of the business interests or some of the real estate interests. The idea of having the city go into the business of owning land, building houses, and renting them is still quite new.

Senator Sheppard: It is being done in Germany to a considerable extent. I understand.

Mr. Watrous: It is being done in Germany to quite an extent, and in the notable case in England that I cited as conducted by the London County Council.

Senator Gronna: It is a new thing to us, but really very old.

Mr. Watrous: One man said to me, ‘You are getting on the verge of socialism when you suggest that.’ I said, ‘I have always prided myself on being as far from socialism as the East is from the West, but if that is socialism. I believe I am a little bit tainted.’

The entry of America into World War I just two months later effectively ended this foray into the question of government assistance for Garden Cities, though it clearly indicates the level of knowledge and interest in Howard’s plan. The war, however, did prove to be a significant factor in the final burst of planning during the Progressive Era. As war related housing communities such as Yorkship Garden Village in New Jersey and Union Park Gardens, Delaware both drew heavily on the principles of the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements. These communities were designed by planners with various agencies of the government which were part of the massive effort to plan and direct the mobilization of America’s resources during the war. Newton summarizes these disparate efforts: “In the War Department, a Camp Planning Section was set up and teams of architects, landscape architects, and engineers were organized quickly to
handle cantonment projects at arm stations old and new from coast to coast. An executive governmental agency, the United States Housing Corporation, was charged with providing new housing at industrial sites; within it a Town Planning Division managed by Olmsted and staffed by landscape architects, worked in close collaboration with architects and engineers on projects throughout the country. Another executive organization, the Emergency Fleet Corporation, set up under the United States Shipping Board, took administrative charge of the vast need for new communities to accommodate the suddenly expanded labor force as shipyards leaped into frenetic action." \[118\] Even the plans for military installations and hospitals included aspects of the Garden City and City Beautiful aesthetic, including landscape boulevards, dramatic gateways, and clustering of buildings into a formal center.

Thus, throughout the Progressive Era Howard's notions of a new urban order, incorporating both industry and agriculture, and Robinson's vision of a new urban aesthetic played crucial roles in ordering and reordering urban space. These elements were at the forefront of planning in the New South, where elites and city boosters desperately sought economic development. It is in the South that Howard's vision of drawing the industrial and the agricultural sectors together in a new urban entity had the most profound impact, as New South leaders searched for ways to construct a modern industrial capitalist economy while salvaging the agricultural economy of the South. The Progressive Era in the New South, then, is one marked by grand schemes of new Garden Cities emerging in unlikely places, such as in the marshes of the Charleston Neck, carrying with them the hopes and dreams of a region searching for its place in the new national economy. These leaders would draw on the expertise of the new

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professional planners, who traveled south on trains carrying with them visions of the Garden City and the City Beautiful, the drawings of a new urban future safely tucked in their luggage, holding out the promise of a truly new South.

End Notes


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3 Ibid., 79.


8 John Nolen, “The Planning of Industrial Cities,” American City 21, no. 6 (1919), 514.

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13 Ibid., 12.

14 Ibid., 13.


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17 Ibid., 40.
18 Ibid., 42
19 Ibid., 42.
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25 Ibid., 56
28 Mosher. 91.
29 Ibid., 92-93.
30 Ibid., 103-104.
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32 American Society of Planning Officials, 98.
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45 Newton, 478.

46 Ibid., 477.


48 Ibid.


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58 Ibid., xv.

59 Ibid., 275.

60 Woodward, 133.


62 Carlton, 17.

63 Ibid.


65 Ibid., 24.

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96 Rodgers, 160-161.

97 Wiebe, *Businessmen and Reform*, 149.

98 Rodgers, 194.

99 Scott, 132.


101 Ibid., 14.

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104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., 200.

106 Ibid.


109 Ford, 8-9.

110 Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, Garden City Movement: Hearing Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry Pursuant to Senate Resolution 305, 64th Congress, 2d Session, 9 February 1917, 3: the hearing before this Subcommittee has apparently not been documented elsewhere in the literature on Garden Cities or on the development of planning in the United States.

111 Ibid. 8.

112 Ibid., 10.

113 Ibid., 13.

114 Ibid., 16-17.

115 Ibid., 18.

116 Ibid., 19.

117 Ibid., 11.

118 Newton, 480.
Chapter 4

“The Greatest Development Project Ever Undertaken Here”

In 1901, in an effort to reestablish its position as the leading South Atlantic port, Charleston hosted the South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Trade Exposition. On a 250-acre site north of the city on the banks of the Ashley River a gleaming city was built to highlight the industrial and agricultural possibilities of the South Carolina lowcountry while promoting trade links with the Caribbean. Drawing heavily on design elements which would become part and parcel of the City Beautiful movement as it flowered in the first decade of the 1900s, the Exposition’s paved streets and lush gardens stood in stark contrast to the fetid alleys and open sewers of turn of the century Charleston. Though the Exposition was a commercial failure that did little to rejuvenate trade ties or the economy of the lowcountry, it provided a model for a new urban future for Charleston and focused attention on the development prospects of the city’s long neglected northern hinterland.

Charleston at the beginning of the twentieth century was a city lacking its former grandeur. Many of the houses of the shabby downtown area sat neglected, with their owners too poor to maintain or even paint the massive structures. Charleston’s commercial sector was lackluster, and there was little industrial activity. Piers and wharves along the Cooper River, bought up by northern railroad interests, sat neglected and rotting, the owners more interested in directing traffic to port cities in the North. Many of the city’s young men escaped to find their fortunes outside of the South Carolina lowcountry, heading for the burgeoning city of New York or the capital of the New South. Through the first decades of the new century Charleston experienced a
series of hopeful beginnings, including the founding of Charleston Naval Station, the phosphate boom, and the creation of the Garden City of North Charleston, only to find disappointment. Still, there was much promise and halting progress as the city slowly cast off the lingering effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction, searching for the key to remaking itself as the premier port city of the New South.

Charleston’s Site and Situation

Established as a proprietary colony by King Charles II in 1665 through the granting of a charter to eight Lords Proprietors, the first permanent English settlement in what Europeans initially called Chicora was founded in 1670 on a tributary creek of the Ashley River. Numbering around 130 souls, the original settlement of Charles Towne was located on a high bluff overlooking the creek, necessary for protection of the small community from the depredations of nearby Spanish, who also claimed the region as part of La Florida and had established a settlement at St. Elena in 1566.¹

After only two years at the original site, the colonists realized that the location of the settlement was not the most advantageous, and petitioned the Lords Proprietors to allow them to move the settlement (Figure 4.1). The proprietors granted permission to move the settlement to Oyster Point at the juncture of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers. In 1680, the town was moved to its present location.²

The Lords Proprietors were keenly interested in applying modern planning principles to the capital of their new colony. Drawing on the planning ideas of Christopher Wren and others linked to the English Renaissance planning tradition, “the Carolina proprietors seem to have had in mind a ‘Grand Modell’ for the town but were never willing to make the investment it would require. Instead, they urged orderly
design upon the residents and kept their own purses firmly closed." The basic pattern for the city was a grid, with broad streets which were perceived as more healthful as well as advantageous in terms of handling wheeled traffic, which the proprietors were hoping would be considerable as trade and thus their profits from their enterprise increased. By 1690 Charles Towne was the fifth largest city in North America with around 1,200 residents, behind New York, Boston, Newport, and Philadelphia.4

The peninsular site for Charles Towne was a low but defensible one, bounded by the Ashley and Cooper Rivers and marshes and creeks to the north where the peninsula narrows to what came to be called “The Neck.” The proprietors’ instructions to the governor of the colony were simple, that he should lay out Charles Towne “into regular streets, for be the buildings never so mean and thin at first, yet as the town increases in
riches and people, the void places will be filled up and the buildings will grow more beautiful.”

Charles Town developed as an entrepot, with trade in agricultural commodities providing the backbone of the colonial economy. The most important goods included rice, tobacco, and indigo, shipped from the wharves along the Cooper River to England and other parts of the growing empire. As Kovacic and Winberry write: “Charles Town was the economic, political, and social focus of South Carolina and an important trading center in the expanding British Empire. Almost all of the colony’s products were funneled to the city, and its merchants aggressively enlarged the port’s influence along the South Atlantic coast. Its size reflecting its commercial importance. Charles Town was the fourth largest city in the American colonies at the time of the Revolution.”

As this colonial economy developed, incorporating arriving immigrants as well as a burgeoning African slave population, a distinct Charleston society was forming. Rogers, in his classic study of early Charleston, notes the development of this society:

Above this turbulent and violent mass of humanity a South Carolina elite was forming. Marriage was the cement of the new society. The importance of family in the society and culture of Charleston cannot be overestimated, and it became highly important by mid-eighteenth century. The natural alliances at first were among the families of business partners or among the families of planters situated at some particular spot. . . . But it was in Charleston that these separate familial groups become one through intermarriage. What drew them to Charleston was a common social life. Planters came to town for the season in late winter, for Charleston was very much like London. Every planter felt he should have a Charleston house, and most did. It was the center of trade, of law, of schooling, and of transportation to Europe. It may well have been the merchants who, acting as a catalyst, transformed these groups into one large lowcountry, or Charleston, society.”

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Thus, as the city prospered a strong class structure emerged, based on the slave owning plantation class and its allies, the merchants. The Charleston elite looked to the English gentry as their model, and situated themselves in an urban landscape based on English Renaissance ideals of class identification in which “design could be erected into a social necessity, which could be used as a measure of the worthiness for admission to status, class, and culture of a particular group.”

In what would become modern Charleston, this design was consciously employed to create a new urban world for the colonial aristocrats based on the permanent city-dwelling merchant class and the seasonal migration to the city by the planters and their families, fearful for their lives during the hot and humid Carolina summers and seeking the perceived safety of the better ventilated city. “The Charleston merchants,” Vance writes, “already trying to create a local-aristocrat caste, were aided by this seasonal influx of the planting aristocracy, the class most revered in the neofeudal society of South Carolina. The impact on city design is obvious: they sought to create a subtropical ‘West End’ fronting on the Cooper river, with large houses built in a consistent pattern on sites that could clearly be ranked, as to precedence, by those carefully erecting the social pyramid Charleston society became. As so rarely occurs, the merchants’ town lost out to the aristocrats, but only because the merchants wished to be included in that class.”

Charleston’s expansion beyond its original plan continued the grid pattern of the original city, with broad streets and large house lots for the planter and merchant elite. New subdivisions like Ansonborough (1746), Harleston village (1770), Mazykboro (1786), and Wraggborough (1796) provided residential opportunities for this class as well as the city’s burgeoning intelligentsia. In addition, within these neighborhoods
narrow streets and alleys were cut, allowing smaller houses for artisans, laborers, and free blacks, which served to give Charleston the appearance of considerable class and race mixing. These extensions of the original core city, along with Radcliffboro and Cannonboro, provided the basic frame for the city into the late 1800s. Though crossed by privately operated ferries, the Ashley and Cooper Rivers prevented easy expansion of the city to the east and west. The Ashley River was bridged in 1819, but the scattered communities located there would not be pulled into the city until much later. And the Cooper River, much broader than the Ashley, was not bridged until 1929, connecting the small fishing village of Mt. Pleasant to the city. Expansion towards the north was slowed by the negative perception of the miasmatic marshes located there. and it was not until an active campaign of drainage and filling began that the city pushed that direction.\textsuperscript{11}

Charleston's site and situation, then, conspired to create a wealthy city that was both strongly class conscious and relatively insular. As Radford notes, "The dominant influence upon the residential patterns of the city were not... market processes but rather the enactment of a particular way of life, based upon an increasingly rigid interpretation of the doctrine of white supremacy."\textsuperscript{12} In terms of insularity, though Charleston's elite seasonally passed from their plantations in the interior to the city, they felt stronger connections with Europe than with the arriving immigrants moving into the Carolina backcountry, creating a sense of isolation from the city's hinterland. This isolation was most apparent in the views expressed from the "upcountry," which viewed Charleston as decadent, inbred, immoral, and, in general, "different." And Charlestonians enjoyed the perception of difference, looking out from their spacious single houses in the...
peninsular city. Thus Charleston, its routes of expansion blocked by both physical and
cultural barriers that held the aristocratic planter and merchant class within the narrow
confines of the English Renaissance city, developed in splendid isolation.

**Developing the North Area**

The north area was initially settled by English colonists through grants of land
by the Lords Proprietors to petitioners. As Smith writes: “Under the theory of the
Charter from King Charles II, the Lords Proprietors were the owners of the soil and
granted it out to settlers.” 13 The petitioner “applied to the representatives of the
Proprietors (the Governor and the Proprietors deputies), and thereupon, on the payment
of the proper fee . . . an order or ‘warrant’ was issued directing the Surveyor General to
survey out to the party the number of acres to which he was entitled.” 14 These north
area grants, many to the original settlers, carried names like “The Palmettoes,”
“Hickory Hill,” “Retreat,” and “Marshlands,” and fronted either on the Ashley or the
Cooper Rivers or one of the many tributary creeks.

These plantations grew indigo and rice, and utilized slave labor which arrived in
South Carolina from the West Indies after the initial settlement in 1670. As Edgar
notes, “During the next twenty years of settlement, more than half the colony’s black
population came from the Caribbean. A good many came with their owners, not as
marketable merchandise.” 15 By 1720, the black population in the colony outnumbered
the white population by a two to one majority, though in St. James Goose Creek Parish,
which included part of the Neck, the percentage of population black was closer to 80
percent, almost all of them slaves. 16
The plantation economy of the north area, though relatively successful, did not leave a lasting imprint on the landscape. There are no plantation houses to visit, with sweeping circular drives lined with majestic oaks conjuring visions of ruffled skirts and exquisite social gatherings. In fact, after the Civil War much of this land would stand abandoned or sold to the freed slaves of the area, who would then provide the labor force for the growing industrialization of the Neck.

In addition to the plantations, which provided raw materials for trade through Charleston, the north area was also the only direct overland connection to the interior. The main road, known as the “Broad Path,” traversed the Neck, “splitting it roughly in half, and so ran as to keep as nearly as possible to the central ridge, avoiding creeks and water courses and the consequent necessity of bridges and causeways.” The Broad Path in the north area was dotted with roadside taverns with names like “Quarterhouse Tavern,” “6 Mile House Tavern,” and “10 Mile House Tavern,” many of which would evolve into depot communities with the coming of the railroad in the 1800s. Running off the Broad Path, which would eventually become the State Road connecting Charleston to the capital of Columbia, was Dorchester Road, linking Charleston to the growing resort community of Summerville, nestled in a pine forest 30 miles northwest of Charleston.

The Charleston Neck was, particularly for the white population, a place to pass through as quickly as possible. The marshes and creeks were perceived as the source of the outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever which periodically swept the “Holy City,” and during the antebellum few whites remained on their plantations during the summer. After the war, there was only a scattering of whites on the Neck in any season. The
perception of the Neck as unhealthy would slow development of the north area into the early twentieth century.

A Struggling Economy

Though South Carolina’s economy during the antebellum period is generally characterized as agriculturally based, there was significant manufacturing in the Charleston area during this period. As Lander notes: “In the decade before the Civil War, Charleston industry, although small by Northern standards, was varied and included iron foundries, rice mills, gristmills, railway car manufacturing shops, shipyards, lumber mills, carriage and wagon shops, turpentine distilleries, saddleries, brickyards, and a few miscellaneous factories.” Thus Charleston could boast of a legacy of manufacturing, though little would survive the Civil War and Reconstruction unscathed as the once thriving Charleston economy collapsed.

In addition to early manufacturing, Charleston’s business elite sought to draw raw materials to the port city by expanding the city’s hinterland and making it the focus of a railroad empire. The effect was meant to counter the growing importance of New York in Atlantic coast trade, because “In 1821 the value of Charleston’s trade was over one-fourth that of New York, but it fell to less than 10 percent in 1831.” The construction of a rail line through the Neck, connecting Charleston to the settlement of Hamburg on the Savannah River was intended to expand the city’s hinterland to the cotton plantations then sending their crop to Savannah. For various reasons the plan did not work. A more ambitious scheme to link Charleston to the American heartland via the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad, chartered in 1835, failed to materialize. Still, railroad building and other efforts at infrastructure improvements
such as canals and roads clearly indicated the willingness of the aristocratic planter and merchant class of Charleston to invest money to boost the city’s economy.\(^{20}\)

After the Civil War, Charleston fell into a torpor, and the best and the brightest of its young people fled the city for greener pastures in Atlanta, the Carolina piedmont, or the booming cities of the North. In 1872, Charleston ended roughly three miles from the famed Battery, and the Charleston Neck became virtually empty of white population, as freed slaves began purchasing tracts of land for small farms (Figure 4.2). One of the oldest such places, Liberty Hill, was in fact settled in 1864 by pre-Emancipation freed men and, after the war, newly freed slaves. The purchase of property was aided by the assistance of the Charleston Freedmen’s Savings Bank, which helped former slaves buy land.\(^{21}\) Another example of this type of post-bellum development in the north area is the Village of Petigru, a 110 acre tract of land subdivided into one acre lots for sale to freedmen in 1873. Though nothing remains in the landscape of this development, it suggests the increasing interest of freed slaves in the Neck, and the corresponding lack of interest of the white population in the area.\(^{22}\)

After the war the development of Charleston’s northern hinterland would become crucial to its efforts to reestablish the economic vitality of the moribund city. The rail lines that had connected Charleston to the interior and helped establish its dominance of the antebellum economy were reoriented as consolidation of railroads led to a shift of traffic from South Carolina away from Charleston to more northerly ports.\(^{23}\) Tracks of the Atlantic Coast Line, Southern Railway, and Seaboard Air Line all served Charleston, passing through the Neck, but no longer did merchants and planters from Charleston dominate the state. Utilizing this infrastructure, however, a new economy
developed on the Neck, based on the extraction and processing of two key raw materials—phosphate rock and timber—and employing the African American population as a work force, transforming Charleston's north area into the major industrial area for the lowcountry.

Industrialization came to the north area with the discovery of phosphate rock at a time when the Charleston elite despaired that "the Yankee victory meant an end to the economy and social structure that previously insured their supremacy." Phosphate, which is used as a fertilizer, was known in the Charleston area prior to 1860, but the combination of the abundance of land and slave labor slowed the adoption of fertilizers to increase yields. In 1867, two local scientists tried to interest Charleston businessmen
in developing the phosphate resources of the lowcountry, but met with little success.

Philadelphia investors, however, jumped at the chance to invest, forming the Charleston
Mining and Manufacturing Company, which began with $1 million in capital. After the
company secured mining leases and began operations, local investors jumped in,
forming companies to mine both river and land rock.\(^{25}\)

The large-scale mining operations transformed the landscape and provided
considerable employment to the African American population of the north area. The
work was exceedingly difficult, as Shick and Doyle write:

Regardless of the size of the company or the method of mining employed, the
phosphate industry depended in large measure on unskilled manual labor. . . .
Although in time mechanical dredges were built to dig the rock, mini-railroads
constructed to transport it, and steam-driven machines designed to prepare it for
market, common, unskilled labor remained the backbone of the industry
throughout its history. . . . Freedmen preferred to be paid by the ‘task,’ a
tradition that originated in the work routines of plantation slavery. Each ‘task’
was to dig a pit fifteen by six feet, and the worker was paid twenty-five to thirty
cents per vertical feet excavated usually four to seven feet. . . . Once the
overburden was removed to expose the phosphate bed, the rock was shoveled
out by hand and carried by wheelbarrow to mechanical washers and drying
sheds.”\(^{26}\)

Mining river rock was just as labor intensive as excavating land rock: “Laborers
dug rock from creeks and streams at low tide or dove to the river bottoms to dislodge
deposits; ‘negroes stripped to the waist, descended to the river bottom with grappling
hooks and iron baskets. They filled the baskets, surfaced, and dived again.’”\(^{27}\) After
digging the rock, it would undergo processing which involved washing and crushing the
rock before placing into vats of sulfuric acid for production into super phosphates,
which would be bagged for shipment.\(^{28}\)

Phosphate production in South Carolina boomed into the 1880s, totaling
542,000 long tons in 1889, an increase of nearly three hundred percent from the
beginning of the decade. As Shick and Doyle note: “South Carolina at this point enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the domestic phosphate industry and was a leading world supplier as well.”29 The Charleston fertilizer plans alone provided nearly one fifth of the US domestic market.30 Moreover, investment in the industry was considerable: “During the height of the phosphate boom from 1880 to 1892 capital invested in machinery, land and plant facilities rose fifty-eight percent, from $3.5 to $5.5 million. At the same time the number of employees rose sixty-six percent from 3,155 in 1880 to 5,242 in 1892,”31 with around half of the workforce in the Charleston area.32 Though many of the companies were owned by outside interests, they “employed managers and sales agents from Charleston’s business community and represented themselves as locally owned to curry favor with area farmers.”33 Charleston’s planting and merchant class invested in mining operations as well, and the Charleston economy boomed, providing the first glimmer of postwar prosperity.

Just as quickly as it had developed the phosphate industry collapsed. Several events served to undermine the industry in South Carolina. The first was the discovery of new, more accessible deposits in Florida in the 1880s and Tennessee in the 1890s. There were, however, other factors: “The demise of Charleston’s lucrative phosphate industry also was due to political conflict within the state, natural disaster, and the decisive role of northern capitalist in determining the course of Southern economic development.”34 In terms of political conflict, Benjamin “Pitchfork Ben” Tillman had risen to the governorship by blasting the Charleston aristocracy of merchants and planters, charging them with growing wealthy at the expense of hardworking upcountry farmers and mill hands. The fertilizer industry was only one of his many targets. In
1890, as Tillman was doubling the royalty on phosphate rock and introducing new regulations on the industry Florida rock reached the market, undercutting South Carolina producers. Compounding the problem, in 1893 a hurricane swept through the lowcountry, killing thousands of people, many of them working in the phosphate mines, and damaging the mining facilities so extensively that many never recovered. Moreover, the depression of the 1890s and the creation of large fertilizer “trusts” dominated by Northern industrialists squeezed out local investors and. “By the early 1900s there were only three independent fertilizer manufactures near Charleston, none of which were owned locally, and two land mining companies, and most of the profits made in the fertilizer business flowed out to Northern investors.” The decline in phosphate production in South Carolina continued relentlessly, falling from 95 percent of total United States production in 1889 to 22 percent in 1900, to less than seven percent in 1910, and to less than one percent of production in the United States in 1920.

The phosphate industry brought considerable wealth to Charleston as well as an industrial model for the north area that could be utilized as the Holy City sought a place in the New South. Another industry which would spur development in the Neck was the lumber industry. Sawmill operations were established along the Cooper River north of Charleston at the beginning of the twentieth century, utilizing both water and rail transport to draw raw materials to the operations. In addition, large docks were constructed along the river to ship finished products out, establishing the north area as not only a shipper of fertilizer but also of wood products.
There were three major lumber companies in the north area: North State Lumber Company, A. C. Tuxbury Lumber Company, and the E. P. Burton Lumber Company. All of these companies employed a considerable number of African American residents of the Neck, and at least one—Burton Lumber—had a small village with a commissary next to the plant. Though not the largest of the north area lumber companies, Burton aggressively purchased woodlands in the area as well as substantial waterfront property while granting rights of way to both the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad and the Southern Railway for the construction of spur lines to the Cooper River. This infrastructure provided the framework that would eventually be used in establishing North Charleston.

**Chicora Park and the Naval Station**

As the phosphate boom dwindled, the business elite of Charleston found itself searching for another avenue of development for its hinterland (Figure 4.3). As boosters in other cities in the New South began developing large suburban parks as a tool to attract outside capital, Charleston also considered this form of municipal aggrandizement. The construction of large suburban parks was part of a "conception of the new urban landscape [that] evolved and became more comprehensive as it was implemented during the second half of the nineteenth century. What began as an attempt to provide city residents with large open spaces that would promote public health and afford opportunities for recreation gradually embraced the planning of the metropolis as a totality. Parks, parkways, park systems, suburbs, and residential neighborhoods in urban subdivisions—all laid out in anticipation of the linear extension of the gridiron—promised to recast city form and naturalize the urban environment."40
Figure 4.3
Chicora Park and Charleston Naval Station
To create a large recreational space for Charleston, in 1895 the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Charleston purchased nearly 600 acres of Retreat Plantation in the north area, outside the city’s municipal boundary. The land bordered on the Cooper River, and the city began making plans for a magnificent pleasure ground. The Park Commission named the new “pleasure ground” Chicora Park and in 1896 contracted with “Mssrs. Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, the celebrated landscape gardeners, of Brookline, Mass.” to prepare “plans for laying out the grounds with walks, lawns, &c.” The Enterprise Street Railway Company built a horsecar line to within a mile of the park grounds to improve accessibility. In 1896, representatives of the Olmsted firm visited Charleston and began designing the park, incorporating the remnants of the Turnbull plantation into the plan. The Charleston Street Railway extended its electrified tracks to the park in 1897 and built a passenger waiting station, a bandstand, and a dance pavilion in an effort to lure riders to the distant park.

Construction on the park continued in 1898 and “Chain Gang” labor laid paths, constructed a pond, built a nursery, and planted hundreds of trees and shrubs. In 1899, land was acquired for a golf course and in 1900 the Parks Commission reported that “The Golf Links have been laid out under a lease to the Chicora Golf Club, and the laying out of these grounds has greatly improved the appearance of the land lying to the west and north of the railway station.” In addition, in true City Beautiful style, the plans called “for a boulevard from the park to Clement’s Ferry Road, a distance of nearly one mile. This boulevard will be one hundred and twenty feet wide, and it is our intention to connect with Rutledge Avenue, which will give Charleston one of the grandest driveways in the country.”

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Chicora Park represents Charleston’s first effort to plan the north area as well as its first substantial experience with professional landscape architects. The winding paths, elegant walks, and landscaped drives would have dramatically altered the development of Charleston’s Neck, if it had been built as planned. The Olmsted firm’s contract expired on January 1, 1901, and “sent to the Board a full and complete bound book of the detail plan of the laying out of Chicora Park in every particular...”45 In 1900, however the City began actively pursuing the Port Royal Naval Station, whose facilities were to be closed, in an effort to revive the lowcountry’s moribund economy. As the city cast its eye for a significant piece of property to offer the government, Chicora Park, with its frontage on the Cooper River, seemed a logical location.46

Charleston’s elite, led by Mayor Adger Smyth, who had made his fortune in the north area’s phosphate deposits, realized the opportunity presented by the closure of the Port Royal Naval Station and began a campaign to secure the facility. “During the early part of 1900,” Admiral Endicott dryly noted in the City of Charleston Yearbook of 1901, “the Mayor of the city of Charleston suggested to the Navy Department the propriety of transferring the Naval Station, located at Port Royal, South Carolina, to the city of Charleston; drawing attention, among other things, to the facilities for transportation to and from the interior, the proximity of a large commercial city, the convenience in obtaining at all times skilled labor of all classes, an abundance of fresh water, etc., advantages which were lacking at Port Royal.”47 The base was not secured by Charleston without a fight, however, requiring the assistance of Charleston’s nemesis, former governor and now United States Senator “Pitchfork Ben” Tillman “despite his distaste for what he called ‘self-idolatrous Charlestonians.’”48 Future
mayor R. Goodwyn Rhett credited Tillman, who was a member of the Naval Committee, with being instrumental in relocating the Naval Station to Charleston: "The Senator at once saw that the opportunity for securing, not only a Naval Station, but a Navy Yard for his native State and for this city was at hand, and was not to be lost."49

The government initially purchased around 1,200 acres, including the waterfront of Chicora Park, at a cost of around $84,000. Subsequent additions to the property would bring the total area of the Naval Station and Navy Yard to around 2,250 acres of both high ground and marsh. The Navy spent over $7 million on improvements to the site over the next six years, including the construction of a 700-foot long pier and dry dock, the largest on the East Coast. Moreover, the federal government would now become largely responsible for maintaining the Cooper River channel, opening the door to improved trade through the port of Charleston.50

The dream of a large landscaped suburban pleasure ground in the north area had given way to one of federal dollars flowing into Charleston's prostrate economy. The successful campaign to secure the Naval Station brought heady optimism to the economically stagnant city. As Rhett writes, the coming of the Naval Station to Charleston "announced to the world, in a manner which cannot be questioned, not only that this harbor has at last become one of the finest on the Atlantic Coast, but that the Government of the United States is prepared to maintain it as such for all time."51

Nevertheless, during its brief life Chicora Park had a profound impact on the city, as editorialized in the local paper as the closure of the park approached:

While awaiting the return of the fiery chariot that was to bear us homeward we sat upon the steps of the pavilion and gazed mournfully at a scene that would soon be lost to us forever. The pale blue of the sky took on soft opal tints as it neared the eastern horizon, sharply defined by the distant pine forests of Christ
Church; below them lay the marsh on the eastern side of the Ashley, still golden in the last rays of the September sunlight. Turquoise blue shone the river, with here and there a white sail lazily drifting on its bosom; and between it and us stretched the marsh, now in shade and mottled with greens and russets in many harmonizing tints; the whole making a picture it would have defied an artist to reproduce; or if he had succeeded he would have been called a lunatic by art critics for the mingling of so many colors. Gradually the light waned, the colors faded and a soft pearly gray tint stole over the scene, suggesting to the mind melancholy reflections on the transitoriness of all that is beautiful.  

**Draining the Lowlands**

Acquiring the Naval Station for Charleston did not come without a fight, and the greatest impediment to attracting the Naval Station to the lowcountry was the perceived unhealthfulness of the environment. As Molloy colorfully describes the controversy: “The location of the yard at Charleston was recommended, but the battle was stiff for a while. Every attempt was made to discredit Charleston as a site; in 1901, during a hearing, the salubrity of the neighborhood north of Charleston came into question. Mayor Smyth was among those testifying; he asserted that his daughters lived in that vicinity and that one of them was five feet nine and one-quarter inches tall and weighed one hundred and sixty pounds and that, in short, she was as healthy a young woman as anyone was likely to find. No doubt this testimony made Charleston wince.”

Mayor Smyth’s daughters obviously did not live on the Neck, and had probably never even stopped there while traveling through, but it was clear to what lengths the city’s boosters would go to proclaim the excellence of the lowcountry climate. The controversy over the north area’s unhealthfulness began to draw attention during the period of campaigning for the Naval Station and provided impetus to a growing movement to drain the lowlands of the Charleston Neck.
The phosphate and lumber industries combined to make the north area the leading industrial region of Charleston. The vast majority of the industrial work force, however, was low paid, unskilled African Americans willing to live on the Neck and work in its marshes. It was estimated that there were 1,400 men employed in the phosphate industry in 1910, the most located in the north area, and of that number 1,100 were African American. In addition, on the islands surrounding Charleston in the latter part of the 1800s a successful agricultural economy based on truck farming of vegetables such as cabbages, potatoes, strawberries, and tomatoes for northern markets had replaced plantation crops like rice and cotton, with both white and African American farmers involved in production. African American farmers were active in small scale agricultural activities on the Neck, but white farmers could not be induced to locate because it was seen as the heart of the “malarial district.”

To make the north area “suitable” for white farmers and industrial workers would require a tremendous effort. Leading the charge to drain the lowlands was Colonel James Cosgrove, a state legislator from Charleston who introduced a bill in 1899 to address the issue: “One of the first causes why agricultural resources of Charleston County have not been developed by the white man is the fear of malaria, which owing to the lack of any systematic plan of drainage has been prevalent in the country districts of not only Charleston, but in all the Counties of the coast of the State. Realizing these conditions, and also the importance to the business prosperity of the city of Charleston of a ‘Hinterland’ settled upon by a frugal, industrious white people... Cosgrove introduced a bill... creating the Sanitary and Drainage Commission of Charleston County.”
At the time drainage work commenced in Charleston County, Cosgrove estimated that there were few white residents in unincorporated Charleston County: “In consulting the Government’s Statistics as to population I found to my surprise that outside of the City of Charleston the white population of Charleston County did not exceed 2,500, and this included the population of three towns, Mount Pleasant, McClellanville and Sullivan’s Island, so that there was not to exceed 500 white people, men, women and children in Charleston County proper.” Drainage work began in the Neck on April 1, 1902 with a work crew of 18 convicts, and in the first report of the Sanitary and Drainage Commission it was noted that in nine months time the territory from the northern boundary of the city to the Chicora Park site had been drained at a cost of just over $5,000. “The territory drained,” the report continued, “comprises about 3,000 acres, and it is now possible for the white man to live in this section without any fear of contracting malaria.” Future work was also outlined in the report, stating:

Our work is now approaching a section that for years has been considered the most lawless in the County; so much so, that it has been called “Hell’s Half Acre.” The reason for this is on account of malaria; the white man has been afraid of his health to live here, and the section has been inhabited almost altogether by negroes. When we have drained these lands this fear may be banished, and white settlers may come into the territory with the assurance that health may be had here, and the lawless element will be either driven out or made to pay its quota in support of the general good.

Progress continued on the project with convict labor supplying the work force. In January, 1904, the News and Courier reported that Cosgrove organized a trip for “a party of gentlemen, including the Charleston County delegation to the Legislature... through the suburbs of the city... and inspected the system of drainage inaugurated by the sanitary and drainage commission for the reclamation of the waste lands of the

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territory north from the city limits to the county line, and for the improvement of conditions previously existing and constituting a constant and flagrant menace to the public health." Cosgrove's efforts met with approval, and "The party returned to the city late in the afternoon, having thoroughly enjoyed the trip and feeling amply compensated for the time spent in viewing the work of the commission, which is at once a decided benefit and a pressing public necessity." In 1904, despite spending a meager $8,000, the Commission reported that "three fourths of the territory known for years as Charleston's Neck has been made healthy for the white man to live upon."

This period also marks a shift from strictly drainage activities to an effort to incorporate roadwork into the Commission's mandate, spurred by the growing "Good Roads" movement sweeping the country. As Cosgrove stated in an interview that year, "next to drainage there is nothing more beneficial to the people than good roads." Cosgrove also pointed out that "One of the most important works undertaken by the commission is the drainage of the public roads." However, the Commission did not have the authority to construct roads, much to the chagrin of Cosgrove, who advocated that the Commission be allowed to construct roads as part of its drainage work.

The 1905 report paints a picture of an arcadian landscape in the north area, "dotted with small farms affording a good support to industrious white farmers and their families from the fertile soil which hereabout abounds," in a section which "has long been regarded as unfit for a white man to live. . . and the inhabitants have been chiefly small negro tenant farmers and charcoal burners. This should be now all changed. The industrious husbandman may now live here in perfect security as to health, and the generous soil untilled in many places for centuries, will reward his efforts with
abundant success.” Moreover, the Commission’s report links draining the lowlands with the attraction of immigrants to the lowcountry: “We have opened up during the year for settlement a territory 3 ½ miles long by about two miles wide, and nearly 5,000 acres of fertile land has been made ready for colonization. . . . To help in the accomplishment of this great object the immigration bureau of the Commercial Club has been established. This bureau is the direct result of the work of the commission, in that we are making the County of Charleston healthy and thus providing the land upon which immigrants may be settled.”

By 1906, the engineer for the Commission reported that “During the past year the Drainage of Charleston Neck had been finished and a considerable amount of work done upon the roads of that section.” Sixty six convicts were working across the county to improve drainage, though the expenditure by Charleston remained a relatively paltry $10,000. With expanded authority, roads were graded and ditched in the north area, but there was no money for purchasing gravel, despite the Commissions exhortations that “Drainage and good roads are both inseparable for the reason that the proper ditching of roads will contribute largely to the drainage of the lands by removing considerable quantities of water through these ditches, and, therefore, with the proper appropriations there will be no difficulty in this Commission giving ‘Good Drainage’ and ‘Good Roads’ to the taxpayers of Charleston County.”

In the 1906 report of the Sanitary and Drainage Commission there is little mention of creating an agrarian landscape populated by white farmer as in previous years. Instead, there is considerable discussion of the recently established Tuxbury Lumber Company and a mention of a new planned residential subdivision adjacent to
the Naval Station. This suggests that by the middle of the first decade of the 1900s, the Charleston Neck was seen as an important industrial region which needed a white labor force to supplant the African American workforce that had emerged with the phosphate and the lumber industries. This is not to say, however, that the notion of small farms dotting the north area landscape was completely forsaken. This idyllic notion would be reborn in the plans for the development of the North Charleston tract a few years hence.

**Charleston Looks North**

With the turn of the century Charleston was looking towards its northern hinterland for economic salvation. The peninsular city, still in the doldrums since the Civil War, was “a pesthole. Pigs and buzzards still foraged for garbage in the city’s streets. Cows were kept in backyards or vacant lots and their unpasteurized milk sold to the poor.” In addition to the phosphate and lumber operations of the Neck, development activity was stirring on the northern edge of the city proper, including the Charleston Almshouse, Washington Race Course and the city’s horse racing track. One of the first projects which involved the planned movement of white population north of the city was William Enston Homes, begun in 1888 as a retreat for the aged and funded through a benefactor. Nineteen cottages for the elderly were built which, “with its detached cottages and spacious, landscaped grounds... presents a well-preserved example of advanced nineteenth century suburban planning concepts adapted to an institution setting, one that illustrates the democratization of architectural form and ideal which until recently had been the exclusive preserve of the nation’s middle and upper classes.”
With Enston Homes and the nearly contemporaneous Olmsted-designed Chicora Park, Charleston was taking its first steps towards large-scale planned projects north of the city. The South Carolina Interstate and West Indian Exposition of 1901-1902 was an even more ambitious attempt by Charlestonians to draw attention to the city while opening the north area to development. The boosters of Charleston realized that “Other communities in the South had achieved great prosperity, and Charleston had not kept step with the rest of the world. It was thought that if the advantages of this port, its geographical position, its nearness to the ocean, and its possibilities in the development of the West Indian and South and Central American trade could be effectively advertised it would be only a question of time, and a very short time, before Charleston would resume its former commercial position.” Though the “Ivory City” was a financial failure, it represents a conjoining of the New South tenet of boosterism and the emerging City Beautiful aesthetic of Charles Mulford Robinson.

Stylistically influenced by the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 and Atlanta’s Cotton States and International Exposition in 1895, the South Carolina Exposition opened in December of 1901. The movement for the Exposition was led by Frederick A. Wagener, a German émigré who had found financial success as a grocer, and other young progressive-minded business leaders. The “Ivory City” was situated on a 250 acre site along the Ashley River that had been the home of the Washington Race Course, which the Exposition “covered... so artistically as to compel the encomiums of all. In working out his conception, the architect gave primary importance and emphasis throughout to what he described in professional language as ‘a typical Southern character and motif,’ and it was because of the fidelity with which
he held to his original and single idea, that the Colonial South and Ancient Spain
blended in building, and landscape, and vista in a way that was fascinating beyond
description."72 The buildings, "with their domes, and towers, and roofs, and great
sweep of unrelieved space... covered with paint so that they would represent a city
done in ivory tint,"73 were set amidst grounds "adorned with statuary and crisscrossed
by wide asphalt walks, which were lined with thousands of roses, azaleas,
rhododendrons, camellias, and oleanders."74 The buildings, or "palaces," were
surrounded by sunken gardens planted with tropical foliage, and the center of the
Exposition contained a large man-made lake. The buildings and grounds "displayed the
most recent technology in machinery, commerce, transportation, and agriculture...","75
and "Around the Sunken Garden, which lay at the southwestern corner of the race
course, was grouped the three main Exposition Buildings—the Cotton Palace, built by
the city, in the central place, with the Palace of Agriculture, built by the State, on the
east, and the Palace of Commerce, built by the Exposition Company, on the west of the
Grand Court."76 Attractions at the Exposition "were... of the cleanest and best
description. There were Esquimaux from Greenland, and tigers from India, and the
Streets of Cairo from Egypt, and Japanese from Tokio, and dancers from the West
Indies, and the Old Mill, and the Educated Horse, and the Battle of Manassas, and
Golden Chariots, and speilers, and all the rest of such an aggregation as was never
assembled before at any Southern Fair."77 Other attractions included the West Indian
Building which included exhibits by Cuba and "Porto Rico, " and the Philadelphia
Building which included the Liberty Bell. The Exposition included a "Negro
Department" under the "general direction of Booker T. Washington," which developed
a “Negro Building” which was “beautifully situated. . . in a grove of century-old live oaks, and was filled with exhibits representing the progress of the negro in agriculture, mechanics, domestic economy, education, morals and religion.” This building was “filled from top to bottom and from end to end with exhibits” lauding the accomplishments and contributions of the African American community to South Carolina and the nation.

The Exposition opened on December 1, 1901 and closed on May 31, 1902, attracting 674,086 visitors, including President Theodore Roosevelt and numerous governors and celebrities. The Exposition, which had been plagued throughout its life by legal actions, left in its wake financial bankruptcy and after closing its assets were placed in receivership. The materials used to construct the Ivory City were sold off to pay debts, and by 1902 little was left of the Exposition’s grand grounds except for the bandstand which stands in present day Hampton Park.

The purpose of the Exposition was to “inaugurate new commercial industries, to keep open new foreign markets. . . and to develop the silk and tea industry, to promote southern manufacturers of cotton and iron, to establish new steamship lines from Charleston, and to promote the port of Charleston.” Though not all of these lofty goals were met, several new economic ventures were initiated, including the American Cigar Factory which was constructed in the city, an oyster-canning business which relocated from Baltimore, and the inception of banana shipments through the port by the United Fruit Company. In terms of the confidence and stature of the city’s young urban progressives, the project represented a considerable boost, since “The Exposition was projected at a time of great industrial and commercial depression in [the] city. and
it was carried through under conditions which tested the courage and patriotism of [its] people. . . . It brought more people to Charleston in six months than had previously visited this city in nearly, if not quite, as many years. It advertised Charleston as it had never been advertised before."83 And though little remained of the Exposition shortly after its closing, it was believed by local boosters that "The benefits which immediately followed the Exposition will be continued in ever-increasing measure in the years that are to come. The rejuvenation of Charleston will hereafter be dated from the Exposition."84

The Exposition drew considerable attention to the growing importance of Charleston’s northern hinterland, and, in combination with the Naval Station and the work of the Sanitary and Drainage Commission, served to open the Neck to the possibilities of more intensive development. Further evidence of the growing awareness of the potential of the north area was provided by the extension of the electric streetcars to the Neck. Pushing the streetcars lines northward connected the developing hinterland to the city, and set the stage for more ambitious plans, including a scheme to link Charleston and Summerville by trolley and the first planned suburban development in the Neck.

The evolution of the streetcar in Charleston followed a familiar pattern, beginning with horsecars after the Civil War which were supplanted by the electric streetcar in the latter part of the 1800s. The first electric streetcars began running in Charleston on June 26, 1897, and over the next year the various lines were combined through merger and absorption into the Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas, and Electric Company by 1898.85 Service had been extended the previous year to Chicora
Park, where the company had built a small zoo, a bandstand, and a dance pavilion, promoting traffic on the line in the local media by touting the healthful benefits of an excursion by rail to the park: “Saturday fares to Chicora Park will be reduced. Such an outing will be beneficial to little children. The bracing ride through the country with the breeze generated by the running of the car has saved many a life. Sickly children are always more cheerful and chirpy after the ride than they were before it was taken.”

The presence of streetcar service to Chicora Park played a major role in attracting the Naval Station to Charleston. By 1904, with the work of the Sanitary and Drainage Commission proceeding in the Neck, an ambitious plan to connect Charleston and Summerville by electric streetcar was announced. As the Commission’s 1905 report noted: “The Secretary of State has granted charters for two electric railway companies, projected to run from the city of Charleston to Summerville, a distance of 23 miles, and we are informed that there is not doubt but that one of these roads will be built in the near future. The gentleman most interested in this road made an investigation of our drainage system, and after being satisfied of its success, at once concluded that an electric road to Summerville, the noted health resort, would be profitable for there could be no question as to the successful development and settlement of the county by white men.”

The Charleston & Summerville Electric Railway Company was formally organized in 1905 and in March of that year executed a mortgage with Knickerbocker Trust Company of New York of $1,000,000 for its property, and issued bonds to capitalize the company. The most pressing issue facing the company was securing a right of way for the railroad. In a letter from the Charleston and Summerville Electric
Railway Company to the phosphate producer Charleston Mining and Manufacturing Company dated December 5, 1904, the Railway Company's superintendent stated that "Our company is about to complete its arrangements for the construction of a trolley line between Charleston and Summerville, and for that purpose would like very much to get a right of way through... [your] lands... Everyone else above the Charleston Mining Company to the town of Summerville has given us a right of way, and in view of the great benefit that this will be to the Charleston Mining Company, we suppose you will be equally considerate."^89

Despite the fact that the company had secured rights of way over the lands of two of the largest phosphate concerns in the area—South Carolina Mining and Manufacturing Company and Virginia Chemical Company—they spent the next year seeking to secure the remainder of the route from smaller property owners. By August 1906, A. J. Warner, President of the North Georgia Electric Company, which was to do the electric work for the line, wrote to the company in despair that "We do not seem to be making very rapid progress in clearing up the rights of way."^90 Even without a secured right of way, the Charleston & Summerville Electric Railway Company contracted with a New York construction firm to begin grading on the railway, and by May 1907 owed over $49,000 in construction costs.91 That same month A. J. Carlisle of the North Georgia Electric Company wrote to the company that "I simply want to tell you that I think we are both up against it as far is (sic) the Charleston and Summerville Railroad is concerned... How do things stand there now, and how much money would it take to start things going on in good shape. That road is a good scheme and had it fallen in proper hands it would have been built long ago. I believe that the thing could
be financed in Charleston, if they could get hold of the property in the right shape. I would advise you not to put any more money in it. . . ."92 The project was abandoned shortly thereafter and the company ceased operation.

Despite setbacks such as the Charleston-Summerville Railroad project, the combination of the electric streetcar and the Naval Station drew considerable attention to the possibilities of development on the Neck. The first planned suburban development in the north area was Buckfield, platted in 1902 on a 16-acre tract fronting on Reynolds Avenue, the major roadway into the Naval Station. Buckfield was a relatively small suburban community of only 126 lots, with lots measuring 40 feet across the front and an average of 120 feet in depth. The subdivision was designed by a local civil engineer and its design is noticeably devoid of any aesthetic elements that hint at the emerging Progressive Era planning principles that would attract favorable attention to the development.93 The streets had a uniform 30-foot right of way and are placed in a rigid grid with no amenities designed into the community. Catering to the Naval Station workforce, by 1903 45 of the 126 lots had been sold to individuals and small bungalows built. Property sales soon stalled, however, and Buckfield remained largely undeveloped, with a scattering of small stores located along Reynolds Avenue to service the base population.94

At about the same time, along the electric streetcar line emerged Chicora Place, the first attempt at a "streetcar suburb" in the Neck. Developed by the Chicora Corporation of Virginia, the 110 acre site adjacent to the Naval Station was planned in 1903, based on "A logical estimate of the possibilities of Charleston and an abiding confidence in the growth of the city northward."95 Much larger than Buckfield, "the
promoters of the ‘Chicora Place’ addition, which bids fair to become a thriving and important suburb of Charleston” planned to “expend nearly $50,000 in improving this tract by grading, laying out streets, establishing ample sewerage and water connections, building granolithic sidewalks and further beautifying the place by planting rows of shade trees along each street.” The only restriction for property purchasers noted in the announcement in the local newspaper was “that none of the lots can be sold, rented or leased to persons of African descent.”

The plan for Chicora Place, drawn by the local engineering firm of Simons and Mayrant in December of 1903, shows none of the insights of progressive town planning then emerging in the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements (Figure 4.4). The subdivision was roughly bisected by the streetcar line, which represented the main amenity for the community. The property was bounded by the Naval Station to the north and the east, Clements Ferry Road to the south, and the Olmsted inspired Chicora Parkway to the west. The subdivision included 786 lots set in a grid pattern of long unbroken streets, which at a relatively modest density of five persons per household would result in an influx of nearly 4,000 white persons to the Neck if the property had developed as planned. The lots were platted at 40 feet by 105 feet, with broad streets with 60 feet rights of way. There were no planned recreational or commercial areas of any kind, and the community lacked any type of central focus or common area of any size. In fact the only feature other than streets and lots were two planned ponds, included for drainage rather than recreational purposes.

Though lot sales began in 1904, and the newspaper reported at that time that nearly one hundred of the lots had already been sold and the “promoters do not
anticipate that any of the lots will remain long unsold." Development of Chicora Place proceeded in fits and starts. After the initial burst of interest, the project stalled, and a group of Charleston investors formed the Navy Yard Home Corporation in 1908 to purchase lots and build speculative houses in an effort to rejuvenate the project. On December 9, 1908 an auction was held offering "500 lots... on the easiest terms possible," to which the developers added that "the benefit which will be derived by the city and vicinity directly and indirectly through the transaction will be of incalculable worth. The feature of the undertaking is to popularize Chicora Place with the people of the community, and to offer inducements to all classes to build near what is certain to be one of the greatest of Government properties." The company arranged for free trolley service to the auction site, prizes of silverware, entertainment by a popular local military band, and other inducements to draw a crowd, though, as the newspaper reported, "The corporation announced recently that only white people would be allowed on the premises..." The company heavily advertised the auction, and sent letters
to those who had already invested in property in the suburb, encouraging them to attend the auction because "The presence of all the local lot owners at the sale will add materially to its success..."\textsuperscript{102} Despite the publicity and advertising, and the newspaper's boosterish report the following day that "The lots sold were in all parts of Chicora Place, and one of them, a corner location, brought $485,"\textsuperscript{103} few lots were actually sold.

By March of 1909, D. Van Smith, an investor in the Navy Yard Home Corporation wrote the representative of the bondholders for the Chicora Corporation and the Carolina Corporation, another Virginia company which had an interest in the property, that "We have made a failure of it, temporarily at least, simply because we were working in a period when money was tight."\textsuperscript{104} Smith goes on to state that the Navy Yard Home Corporation was putting its faith in a new advertising plan, and that "We do not want one dollar out of it, all we want is the opportunity to work it, so that we may try and increase our revenue by the gradual sale of lots from our days work in that direction, or by the sale through this advertising scheme, and first and foremost the bondholder's will be protected by any result we secure from this work."\textsuperscript{105} The advertising scheme included a booklet of testimonial letters from Charleston's elite, including Mayor R. Goodwyn Rhett, who thanked the company for the information on "the town you are developing alongside the Navy Yard" and proclaiming that he was sure "that houses built in Chicora Place will be occupied just as rapidly as completed."\textsuperscript{106} Other testimonials came from the President of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, the President of the State Savings Bank, Charleston Commercial Club, and the Charleston Savings Institution, all testifying in varying degrees to the bright
future of the Navy Yard and Chicora Place, which, as one writer noted had “every city convenience. . . including city water, sewerage, electric lights, cement sidewalks, shade trees, telephones and in fact everything else necessary to make life comfortable and happy.”

Despite the advertising push, by 1910 there remained 474 unsold lots at Chicora Place, with an additional 42 lots under contract from the Chicora Corporation to the Navy Yard Homes Corporation, the mortgages of which had never been delivered because payment had not been made. Thus nearly two thirds of the property sat undeveloped, and, in the words of a Charleston attorney in a letter to real estate entrepreneur and future mayor of Charleston Tristram T. Hyde, who had expressed interest in purchasing the distressed property, “If your company would care to take up this proposition, I think it would be bought at a figure which would leave a handsome profit to the purchaser.”

Lots had sold for a relatively healthy price of $250.00, with some selling for $450.00, but there had not been enough activity to sustain the development. With the coming of World War I and the sudden expansion of the Naval Yard and other war-related facilities that would sweep over the Neck, numerous houses would be built at Chicora Place. A second boom would come with World War II, and by 1950, nearly twenty years after the streetcar ceased operation in the north area, Charleston’s first streetcar suburb would be built out.

The major impediment to successfully developing Chicora Place in the early 1900s was the vagaries of employment at the Naval Station and the general weakness of Charleston’s economy. Employment levels at the naval facility in the first decade of the century reached only a few hundred civilian workers, certainly not the economic boon
that Charleston's boosters had envisioned. Moreover, Charleston’s economy in the first years of the new century was in a tailspin, despite all its efforts to attract new industries. In terms of trade, for instance, “Consolidation and higher freight rates to ports south of Cape Hatteras caused trains that had previously carried exports from upcountry South Carolina to Charleston to take them to Norfolk and points north. While Atlanta, Augusta, Columbia, Charlotte, and northeastern cities, all growing in size, were linked in the 1890s by a new southwest, northeast rail axis, Charleston became a commercial backwater, and by 1900 its exports were only 2 percent of the national total.”

Moreover, Charleston’s population growth had slowed to a crawl, as its “population relative to other American cities continued to decline: in 1870 it ranked twenty-sixth among urban centers, in 1890, fifty-third, and by 1910, ninety-first. During the last decade of the century, the city’s population increased by a mere 1,000, while Savannah and Jacksonville each grew by 10,000, Augusta by 6,000, and Atlanta by nearly 25,000.”

Further hampering Chicora Place’s success, however, was its aesthetic design and its target market. Chicora Place was not designed as a streetcar suburb for Charleston’s elite, and not even for a “labor elite,” but instead as a housing area for civilian workers at the Charleston Naval Station. The suburb as planned incorporated none of the design principles of Progressive Era planning then pulsating through the nation, lacking park space, playground space, or spaces for schools or any other kind of civic activity. As designed, Chicora Place would have lured few residents of Charleston to relocate to the north area, and would certainly have had no appeal to the merchant and planter elite who still owned manses in the peninsular city. Nevertheless, Chicora
Place represents the first attempt at building a large scale planned residential area in the Neck, and represents an important step in the process of transforming the north area into an urban industrial landscape. What was needed, however, was a new model, one that would attract white industrial workers as well as farmers to Charleston’s Neck. It would simply not do for a city striving to find its place in the New South to have its industrial workforce largely based on African American workers in the phosphate and the lumber industry. Charleston’s boosters would look to a much grander model to develop its northern hinterland, and in the process create the first New South Garden City, drawing together the industrial and the agricultural sectors into a new urban framework which would catapult Charleston back into its proper place as a leading trading and manufacturing city of the South.

Creating North Charleston

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Charleston was seen as firmly rooted in an indolent past, despite the many efforts to attract new development. This perception was fueled by travel writers who believed that “Charleston belongs to the past and will until the last house crumbles to dust and the last proud Tory is laid to rest in the churchyard of St. Philips or St. Michael’s. Charleston is perhaps the only city in America that has slammed its front door in Progress’s face and resisted the modern with fiery determination.”

This romanticized vision of Charleston locked into an antebellum past was at best only half right. Outside of the confines of the historic downtown there were ambitious plans to drag Charleston into prominence in the New South. Far and away the most important of these efforts was the creation of North Charleston, which stands
as one of the most ambitious development projects in the South during the Progressive Era (Figure 4.5).

In September of 1912, a group of prominent Charlestonians chartered three corporations, the North Charleston Corporation, capitalized at $1,000,000, the North Charleston Farms Corporation, capitalized at $50,000, and the North Charleston Water and Light Corporation, capitalized at $20,000. The purpose of the project, as described by the Charleston News and Courier, was clear: "The project involves between 4,500 and 5,000 acres of land situated between Philbin’s (sic) Creek and Noisette’s Creek, on Charleston Neck, north of the Navy Yard. The purposes of the projectors are in the main the development of factory sites and of farm lands." Sensitiveto the issues relating to the growing control of the lowcountry economy by out-of-state interests, the article reported that "Backing the project are a number of local capitalists. . . . It is understood that practically all of the capital has been made up locally and the project will be altogether local."

The scale of the project was clear from its inception. As was reported in the News and Courier, "When the North Charleston project gets well under way, a new town will appear on Charleston Neck, north of the Navy Yard, a town which may in a short time attain to a very considerable size. The establishment of big manufacturing plants on the sites to be prepared and made available by the North Charleston Corporation and the opening of many acres of fertile farm lands to white farmers will centre a population of some thousands of people in this area. It is expected that before
Figure 4.5
North Charleston and Charleston Farms
many months a flourishing and prosperous community will have been established."

The site of the new city was considered very conducive to development, despite its location in the Neck, still perceived by many as a place to be avoided: "The North Charleston area is situated on a ridge between the two creeks, the land being considerably higher than Charleston itself. The ground is said to be exceptionally rich and capable of much development along agricultural lines. As factory sites also the North Charleston area is unsurpassed. It touches the Cooper River on the east and is practically surrounded by railroads, the main lines of the Southern and Atlantic Coast Line and several spurs built by these two roads making a complete network about this property.""

North Charleston’s developers were among Charleston’s wealthiest and most prominent individuals, all of whom were active in promoting the city’s economic future. The initial investors active in the new development included Robert Goodwyn Rhett, Robert L. Montague, Edward W. Durant, Henry Buist, Tristram T. Hyde, and James O’Hear. These men were all part of the “boni,” the “good” or elite society of the peninsular city who considered themselves members of the Progressive Capitalists that had dominated the city during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Identified as the “Broad Street Ring... these men had good social connections and, as conservative managers of the city’s money, could generally count on the support of the News and Courier... [T]hey sought new industries, welcomed federal funds, and enjoyed good relations with the more progressive governors in the state capital...” These men would embark on the most ambitious development project ever attempted in the lowcountry, hoping
through this effort to catalyze economic development that would catapult Charleston into the forefront of New South cities.

**The Visionary**

Among this group, one man, R. Goodwyn Rhett, stands as the true visionary of the possibilities of North Charleston. Rhett was the driving force behind the project who saw, amidst the marshes and low places of the north area, that "a new town will appear on Charleston Neck." Born in Columbia in 1862, Rhett bore the mantle of a distinguished South Carolina family—his grandfather's brother was Robert Barnwell Rhett, one of the leaders of the secession movement—and acquitted himself well both in business and politics. Rhett was perceived as one of Charleston's most distinguished gentlemen, and even after the collapse of his beloved People's National Bank during the Great Depression stripped him of his wealth, he commanded tremendous respect in the lowcountry.119

After growing up in Charleston, Goodwyn Rhett studied law at the University of Virginia, completing his studies in 1884. Rhett practiced law for a time in Charleston, but by 1896 he had largely redirected his energies to the banking sector, becoming president of People's Bank in 1899. As his interest in commercial and financial matters grew, Rhett began organizing the younger, more progressive business class of Charleston, fitting a pattern across much of North America and Europe. Rhett and other young businessmen sought to spur activity and interest in the lowcountry, and "Between 1903 and 1910... founded the Commercial Club, the Charleston Manufacturing, Jobbers, and Banking Association, and reorganized the Chamber of Commerce."120 These organizations engaged in a variety of endeavors, including tours of other southern
cities to promote trade links, lobbying the railroads to build new facilities, and
encouraging new industries and immigration, all designed to heighten awareness of
Charleston’s potential as well as to energize the generally lethargic Charleston merchant
class.

Politically, Rhett was closely identified with the Progressive Movement, which
in its New South manifestation was tied to the Democratic Party. The Progressive
Capitalists, as they were called, were not “rich by the standards of New York, Boston,
or Philadelphia, but by the standards of Charleston in 1908 they were affluent. Among
them were Presbyterians and Methodists, some Episcopalians, and a few Baptists and
Lutherans. They could get along with politicians who spoke for the white working
classes if they had to, but their Progressivism was for whites only.”121 Rhett first
entered the political arena as an alderman on Charleston City County in 1895, and in
1903 he ran unopposed for Mayor of the city.

Rhett was “a man of unusual personal charm, tall, handsome and graceful.”122
who was involved in nearly every major development in Charleston from 1895 until
1930. Rhett’s hand, it can safely be said, did more to reshape the physical landscape of
the lowcountry than any other single person during the opening decades of the twentieth
century. As Alderman, Rhett was well aware of the design of Chicora Park and was
very supportive of the effort to build a suburban park. His first major contribution to
the City, however, was his involvement in securing the Naval Station for Charleston.
traveling with Mayor Smythe to Washington to lobby for the facility. Rhett was also
one of the leaders of the effort behind the South Carolina Interstate and West Indies
Exposition of 1901, serving on the Ways and Means Committee which responsible for
drumming up contributions to the Exposition. As mayor, Rhett embarked on numerous projects that would begin reshaping the city and firmly establish him as a Progressive Era mayor. His efforts clearly illustrate that he was well aware of the early design aesthetic associated with the emerging discipline of planning, based on both Garden City and City Beautiful principles.

Upon his election as mayor, one of the first challenges facing Rhett was the wretched physical environment of the city. As Fraser writes:

When Rhett became Mayor, some 12,000 privy-vaults remained the primary means of human waste disposal, their contents leeching into the soil and their smells befouling the air. . . . Hogs wallowed in low-lying lots and the meat of slaughtered animals was often exposed to all sorts of contamination before it was sold. The few health inspectors were not adequately trained and Charleston was 'a dumping ground for all the condemned meat turned away from other cities.' Dozens of cows were kept locally for milk for private consumption and sale. Citizens protested efforts to banish the cows by arguing that warm milk was need for their babies and milk sales provided an income for poor widows. Mosquitoes swarmed through the city and there was not program for the medical examination or vaccination of school children. Streets were filthy. . . .

Further compounding the city’s dismal appearance, “Charleston remained a patchwork of mostly unpaved and unconnected streets, lanes, and alleys. Over half of the fifty-eight miles of roadways were dirt, about one-third were paved in granite, brick, or asphalt, while the rest were gravel, oyster shells, cinders, or cobblestones.” The challenge, then was great: “When Rhett took office in 1903 . . . Charleston . . . was a stinking, rotting unhealthy, poverty stricken, ill-governed town, better known for its vices than its culture. Rhett hoped to lead the city along the path of reform.”

Rhett instituted long range planning early in his administration, undertaking the laying of new water and sewer lines as well as road and street repairs. In his first year in office he created the Board of Public Works to rationalize street paving and repair

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throughout the city, which before Rhett had largely been based on political patronage. In 1909, under Rhett’s leadership, the City Council appropriated $340,000 to lay new sewer lines. In addition, Rhett oversaw the completion of a water treatment plant and supply system to deliver improved water to Charleston from Goose Creek reservoir to the north of the city. To accomplish these goals Rhett raised taxes in 1904 and again in 1911. Despite these increases, however, the Charleston real estate market boomed. The total value of taxable property, which had dropped twenty five percent between 1895 and 1904, rebounded by fifty percent between 1904 and 1911, clearly indicating a growing lowcountry economy under Rhett’s management.127

As mayor, one of Rhett’s major areas of interest was promoting immigration of Europeans to Charleston, with the goal of building a white work force in the lowcountry. To this end Rhett was very supportive of the state’s efforts at drawing immigrants to South Carolina, exemplified by the creation of the Department of Agriculture, Commerce and Immigration in 1904. This department was charged with encouraging immigration to South Carolina among “white citizens of the United States, citizens of Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, France and all other foreigners of Anglo-Saxon origin,”128 and was empowered to pay passage. The first significant endeavor by the department was the sailing of the \textit{Wittekind}, a ship of the Lloyd line, that sailed to Charleston in September, 1906 with 476 German, Austrian, Belgian, and Dutch immigrants on board. The voyage of the \textit{Wittekind} “marked the first successful undertaking to promote direct immigration from Europe to the South Atlantic section of the United States in half a century, and was the immediate result of the effort of South Carolina to supply through State agency, the pressing necessities of a white industrial

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population to develop its resources and increase its productiveness." The immigrants were “distributed to many points in South Carolina, most of the going to the cotton mill villages,” though many also stayed in Charleston. The city had opened its arms to the new arrivals, and “The assistance given by the people of Charleston, chiefly through the city officials, directed by Mayor Rhett, and the Committee on Immigration of the Commercial Club . . . was especially appreciated.”

In March of 1907 Rhett and others successfully lobbied to establish an immigration station in Charleston, and it seemed Charleston might become the gateway to the New South for a burgeoning immigrant population. It was not to be, however, as the first immigrants quickly became dissatisfied with working conditions and the low pay in the mills of South Carolina. In fact, “Four days after they had passed through Charleston on the way to interior towns to work in the mills, a party of twenty-two immigrants . . . returned to Charleston. . . dissatisfied with their employment.” As was noted in a report the following year, “the complaints were based primarily on the wages received in South Carolina. . . . Some reported that they were making less money in South Carolina than they made at home.” Within the year most of the immigrants had left the state, either returning home or moving north or west. Though Rhett’s interest in bringing immigrants to South Carolina through Charleston continued, the organized effort to attract workers to the South effectively ended with the 1906 voyage of the Wittekind.

Rhett’s first major planning project steeped in the ideals of the City Beautiful was the construction of “The Boulevard.” Begun in 1909, the project to extend the city’s famous Battery westward involved building a seawall and filling approximately
forty seven acres of marsh on the Ashley River from White Point Garden at the southern tip of the peninsula to Chisolm’s Mill, a distance of around 4,000 feet. In a forward looking article entitled “The Charleston of Tomorrow” Rhett described The Boulevard as “but the beginning of what should extend to Hampton Park, and be the most beautiful of all drives—a great Palmetto avenue interspersed with parks. On the site of Chisolm’s and Anderson’s Mill a great hotel, bounded on the north by the extentions of Colonial Park and Lake to the river in some suitable design. In fact, the river front from Hampton Park to White Point Gardens should be given up to the City Beautiful.”

In classic City Beautiful prose, Rhett further describes the project as “the beginning of what, I trust, will be made a Palmetto River Drive and park, extending from Shamrock Terrace, on East Bay, and skirting the rivers continuously until it reaches Hampton Park. The avenue is planned to be seventy feet wide—a stone or concrete sidewalk next to the river, nine feet in width—a grass plat, with palmettoes. nine feet in width—an asphalt block roadway thirty-five feet in width—another grass plat, with palmettoes, nine feet in width, and a sidewalk eight feet in width. The houses are required to be recessed at least twelve feet from the sidewalk, and are confined to residences.”

The Boulevard represents Charleston’s first conscious attempt at creating a City Beautiful landscape. The project also included an interesting financing arrangement, as “The cost is divided amongst the city and the property owners in proportion to the cubic yards of filling on the streets and lots, respectively, except as to the wall and filling in front of the houses and lots on South Bay. As to the latter, the city pays the entire cost and the property owners release their interests in the land on which the wall and
Boulevard is constructed.” The plan was that the cost to the city of the new wall and the fill would be recouped by selling the newly created residential lots. The lots would be sold by the city under a contract with a real estate venture called the West End Development Company, which included many of Rhett’s prominent supporters. Though the sale of the lots would get held up by litigation to determine the legal status of the arrangement between the city and the West End Development Company, the city’s coffers eventually were reimbursed for much of its expense, and “The project reclaimed a beautiful expanse of land from the sea and marsh, contributing the finest residential area to the city.”

With the construction of the sea wall in the hands of a Baltimore company and the platting of the lots and streets completed by James O’Hear, Rhett contracted with the firm of Olmsted Brothers to do the site planning for the further work north of Chisolm’s Mill. Rhett was familiar with the firm’s work not only by reputation but also through the Chicora Park plan, with which he would have been familiar as alderman on the City Council. Land planning for the Ashley riverfront began in 1910, and the first preliminary sketch plans were mailed to Rhett on January 12, 1911. Rhett was deeply involved in the details of the plan, as illustrated by the extensive comments in a letter to Olmsted Brothers in which he noted that “you refer to a garden to the East of the present East Battery wall. Curiously enough I have just been considering some plan for that development. My idea was that a wall should be constructed about 400 feet from the present wall, not only in front of East Battery, but further northward to Tradd Street, and this wall should join that which it is proposed to construct from the East end of the wall just completed.” Though Rhett admits that “I do not see any immediate
prospects of carrying all of this into effect,” he hastens to add that “I would like to interest parties in erecting a large and handsome hotel on the site of Shamrock Terrace, with some plan for a park in front of it, and to the South of it. This of course would be an immense benefit to such a hotel, and the parties erecting it could well afford to contribute towards it, but I do not expect such a Park to extend South of it at the present time, more than 100 feet or 200 feet. I had been thinking of making this Park a triangle, using the wall of East Battery for one side, the South Wall of Shamrock Terrace extended out 400 feet as the other side, and the hypotenuse of the triangle to be a wall constructed from East Battery to the Southeastern corner of the latter side.”

This project, firmly rooted in the City Beautiful ideals espoused by Robinson, stands as Rhett’s permanent contribution to the landscape of peninsular Charleston. By 1911, the city had spent $261,211 on the Boulevard, making it one of Charleston’s most expensive improvement projects. With its addition of 191 large residential lots in a well-designed landscape, the Boulevard represents Charleston’s greatest contribution to the catalogue of municipal improvements generated by the City Beautiful movement. However, the grand Palmetto Avenue along the Ashley River, connecting the Battery to Hampton Park, envisioned by Rhett and planned by Olmsted never materialized. Still, the project is illustrative of the power of City Beautiful planning as well as its utility when employed in projects with a practical benefit.

Rhett’s sensitivity to form and function as expressed in The Boulevard project characterizes other work undertaken during his two terms as mayor. One such project was the construction of Charleston’s first “skyscraper,” an eight-story office building located on Broad Street. In the first decades of the twentieth century, as the New South...
creed of progress mixed with the bourgeois Progressive Capitalists of Charleston and elsewhere, “Urban growth symbolized by high-rise buildings became synonymous with a southern image of economic progress.” Though the People’s Building, as the home of Rhett’s People’s National Bank was called, was technically not a skyscraper, it was far and away the largest building in the peninsular city at the time of its completion in 1911. The building stood as a symbol of the city’s growth and progress under Rhett. Moreover, the People’s Building was intended to mesh with Charleston’s architectural environment, indicating that Rhett was very conscious of the symbolic meaning of the urban landscape. Rhett wrote in 1909, as the building was being planned, that “The promoters [which included Rhett himself] have endeavored to give the city a building that will be an ornament, even amidst its exquisite architecture, as well as a much needed facility in aid of the prosperity they have striven so long and so hard to bring about.”

As a very popular, business minded mayor who was cut from the Progressive cloth then taking shape across America, Rhett ran unopposed for re-election in 1907. Though Rhett was a Democrat, as were the vast majority of white politicians in the South, he easily moved in Progressive Republican circles, entertaining William Howard Taft several times in his grand Broad Street home. His bipartisanship hurt him, however, particularly in an unsuccessful 1908 bid for the United States Senate, when John P. Grace, a populist Irish American Charlestonian, accused Rhett of not being a “true” Democrat and threw his hat into the ring, splitting the lowcountry vote. That was Rhett’s last election, and in 1911 his chosen successor, Tristram T. Hyde, was defeated by Grace in a populist uprising against Rhett’s “Broad Street Ring.”

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As Rhett's political career closed, a new career as a national business leader began. Rhett had been elected president of the League of American Municipalities in 1905, placing him on a national stage, but in 1916 his stature increased dramatically when he was elected president of the United States Chamber of Commerce. The national Chamber of Commerce was established in 1912 as one of the many organizations charting and containing the reform impulse in America. These organizations, "By supplying progressivism with a practical, durable substance which late-nineteenth century reform had lacked...determined the character of the movement." Rhett was the second president of the national body, and his "choice was vital. A South Carolinian whose name recalled memories of Southern glory. [he] converted a number of Southern critics...into warm friends of the Chamber." As the News and Courier opined, "The selection of a Charleston man for the presidency of an institution like this, in the full tide of its vigor and usefulness, is not only a recognition of the qualifications which Mr. Rhett possesses for such a position. but it is a tribute to the South."

Rhett had established himself as a leading spokesperson for the business interests of the New South. The principles he espoused were firmly based in a middle ground between cooperation and competition, as described in a 1916 speech to the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce annual meeting, "because in these two economic forces are to be found the sources of commercial and industrial stability and growth." Rhett also felt comfortable addressing the interests of labor, decrying in a speech at the annual Charleston Trades and Labor gathering the mistreatment of workers and noting that "As one after another of our industries drifted into monopolies, the condition of
labor would have been little better than that of the Russian serfs had it not been for its unions. And had not a measure of relief been afforded through these organizations the very foundations of our Government would, in my judgement, have been shaken by the discontent arising from such unendurable oppression.\textsuperscript{150}

By 1920, Rhett's political and economic philosophy crystallized in an invitation to deliver the prestigious Weil lecture at the University of North Carolina. The Weil Lecture was established to present views on American citizenship, and the inaugural lecture was given in 1915 by former president William Howard Taft. The series included numerous luminaries, such as Felix Frankfurter (1936), Henry Wallace (1937), William Fullbright (1945), Eleanor Roosevelt (1950), and Jimmy Carter (1985), placing Rhett in august company. That Rhett was recognized in this group is a clear indication of his prestige in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

The title of Rhett's philosophical treatise was "The Progress of American Ideals," firmly positioning himself within the lingering spirit of the Progressive Era. Rhett was clearly pleased with the progress made in the short span of occupation of America by "Americans": "The progress of the American people in the brief period of their existence on this continent marks one of the most remarkable national achievements of history. The natural wealth and resources of the country are, in many respects, without parallel but this of itself could not account for such progress. That it supplied a stimulant to greater effort and greater accomplishment cannot be doubted, but the men who made America their home unquestionably developed within themselves a spirit which is distinctive;--a spirit which has been transmitted from generation to generation, and caught up by the millions who have come to us from other
nations, ever spurring them on to greater and greater achievement. It is that spirit which we call Americanism." Over the course of the following 118 pages, Rhett discussed "three manifestations of this spirit. . .: the social structure and development of America, -the political organization and government of America, --and the industrial progress and problems of America." 

In Rhett's formulation of the social structure and development of America, "The intellect and character of a people would seem to depend primarily upon racial and inherited capacity, and then upon educational development." Rhett's thoughts on race and intelligence were representative of broadly held notions in the first decades of the twentieth century, in which it was commonly believed both in and outside the South that "no race has ever done more for the advancement of civilization than the Anglo-Saxon Race." Developing his theme of inherited capacity, Rhett casts his gaze upon recent immigrants to the United States from southern and eastern Europe which, in his words, "consisted generally of uneducated and unintelligent paupers.--including too often degenerates, imbeciles, and criminals, in spite of the provisions of our labor laws prohibiting the admission of such." Rhett does not propose a solution to this issue, but instead offers the questions "But what are we going to do about European immigration in the future? Are we going to have barred zones or barred strains or are we going to depend upon the influence of American environment and education to transform whatever may come into the great melting pot from that continent, to fill them all with the true spirit of America, in the confident assurance that the result will not impair the great Nation which in our time it is our duty and our privilege to uphold?"
For Rhett and the South, however, the question was not immigrants but the African American population. As with the immigrant population, Rhett had little positive to say in the formulation of his “American Ideals,” believing that “Amalgamation with the negro race is inconceivable to us, and its real participation in the Government at this time would certainly result in a degradation of our civilization and a menace to our democracy. . . .”  

Rhett acknowledged, however, that “we owe much to those of the negro race who were brought here without their consent.” In Rhett’s mind, the single most important thing owed the African American population was “education, and in my judgement, we are discharging this obligation in no mean degree. . . .” He defends the disfranchisement of the African American population in the South while claiming that “they are now enjoying in our midst opportunities for self-development, and a greater happiness than they could ever hope to attain in any country of their own.” Rhett went on to tell his listeners, “Now, what of the future? We do not know. We can but pursue what we deem to be the only course consistent with civilization and white supremacy and trust that time will reveal some means of giving them a larger measure of liberty without the menace it would now occasion.”

Rhett’s views on race and intelligence aside, he was progressive in his belief in the power of education. He insisted that “However men differ as to the inborn heredity as the basis of capacity, there is no difference of opinion as to the necessity of education.” Rhett expressed considerable faith in the role of education in preserving his vision of America, believing that “the time has surely come when a standard of American ideals ought to be worked out, and made a part of every school and college course.”

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In terms of political ideals, Rhett believed that American liberty was under assault by new and un-American definitions of liberty, identifying three “directions which this distorted interpretation of liberty has taken. . . . the Socialist, the Anarchist, and the Syndicalist.” Rhett demonstrates an admirable knowledge of Marx’s work, whom he calls “The Prophet of the Socialist.” According to Rhett, Marx believed that “Modern industry was so multiplying the industrial worker and so oppressing him that a clash was bound to ensue, resulting in revolution and a dictatorship of the proletariat. . . .” Rhett goes on to quote from the Communist Manifesto for his audience, including the stirring conclusion “Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.”

Rhett distinguishes between the Socialist and the Anarchist Communist. He informs his audience that “While the orthodox Socialist believes or pretends to believe that the individual will become free if the State becomes the sole Capitalist under the control of the proletariat, the Anarchist Communist fears that the State might merely inherit the tyrannical propensities of the private capitalist; accordingly he seeks the complete abolition of the State.” Rhett goes on the caution his listeners that “We must not believe that all anarchists are of the bomb and dynamite variety.” He then cites Peter Kropotkin as “The most prominent writer on the subject of anarchy,” who, Rhett says, “appeals very strongly to the idealistic, and has unfortunately found many followers, especially among students who have not had the opportunity of seeing the complexities of a social organization such as exists in the present day.”

Rhett then goes on to describe, in a relatively friendly reading of anarchist thought, Kropotkin’s writings, which, Rhett states, “relies on the possibility of making
work pleasant. He holds that in such a community as he foresees practically every one will prefer work to idleness, because work will not involve over-work or slavery, but will be merely a pleasant activity for certain hours of the day, giving a man an outlet for his spontaneous constructive impulses. He would remove compulsion;—would have no law and no government *exercising force*, but he would still have acts of the community to spring from concerted thought and universal consent, but not from enforced submission of even the small minority.”

Rhett criticizes Kropotkin’s ideas as utopian, warning that “No one who has any practical knowledge of every day life, even to a very limited degree could fail to see the utter folly of such a dream,” but, Rhett hastens to add, “when men are miserable and suffering from want and oppression they are ready to listen to any remedy which might possibly bring about change.”

Rhett identifies “Syndicalism” as “the extreme development of Industrial Trade Unionism.” He goes on to say that “While Socialism would substitute ownership by everybody (with the proletariat in control), and Anarchism by nobody, Syndicalism aims at ownership by Organized Labor.” “There is,” Rhett adds, “but one bargain [the Syndicalists] will make with the employing class—complete surrender of all control of industry to the organized workers.”

Rhett goes on to advise his audience of the appeal of these challenges to the “ideals” of American liberty: “If we examine what lies at the root of all these doctrines, we find it is discontent with the inequalities of conditions which have always existed and which now exist in every form of government. That such inequalities do exist... is unquestioned.” Rhett exhorts his listeners not to heed these “distortions of liberty which would plunge society “into an orgy of bloodshed and suffering,” but he also
reminds his audience that “this agitation [for change] reminds us... that our Democracy yet has many steps to go, and urges us on towards some more practical solution of the hardships and injustices of many of our inequalities.”

The major reasons that these doctrines appeal to the worker, in Rhett’s formulation is that “The organization of industry has proceeded to such lengths that the working man in industry necessarily has become just as much subject to the organization as the citizen is subject to the government.” Rhett is highly critical of the industrial conglomerates that dominated the economy of the United States during this period, contending that “Some employers content themselves with providing for working conditions and the living conditions which in their judgment are best for the laborer, and further with the giving of bonuses and other proofs of generosity. They do not recognize the fundamental fact that it is not so much the actual living condition or working conditions, or even compensation for which the laborer is contending as the right to have a voice in the determination of them. The extent to which this right can be granted without destroying the very existence of the industry is the problem we have to solve.”

Rhett concludes his treatise on “American Ideals” with a detailed discussion of industrialization and the difficult relationship between labor and capital. Continuing from his earlier theme, Rhett is highly critical of the industrial “trusts” built by “Captains of Industry” that emerged in the late 1800s and early 1900s, citing “the immense inequalities which resulted....” Rhett’s fundamental questions were “whither is this movement to concentrate capital and industry to take us? Where are we to find an equilibrium under our democratic form of government which shall leave its
Rhett contended that a new spirit of cooperation needed to be found, and drew his hope for a solution to the issues swirling around labor and capital from a conference called by President Wilson. Rhett told his listeners that “this Conference, without realizing that its members have gone to the very root of the evils which have grown up within the years . . . [has] striven to eradicate them thoroughly by a substitution of confidence and trust for suspicion and distrust; of cooperation for coercion; of love for hate; of industrial peace for industrial war. . . . In fact we must work out democracy in industry within our democracy in government and as part of it, or we shall not secure any real contentment amongst our working classes.”

How were Rhett’s governmental and business experiences as well as his thoughts concerning “The Progress of American Ideals” reflected in his vision for North Charleston? Rhett was that curious blend, so common in the progressive movement in the New South, of pragmatic businessman and idealistic reformer. Rhett believed that creating opportunities would lift up all citizens--white, black and immigrant--though these opportunities had to be carefully managed by pragmatic individuals of the “better sort” who were present in every community. This blend is clearly in evidence in Rhett’s vision of a New South Garden City, taking elements of Kropotkin’s views on cooperation and the opportunities offered by the combination of industry and agriculture, distilled through Howard’s exposition of the Garden City, and mixed with practical elements of “American Ideals” such as private property to create a new urban model for development.

By 1912, when the planning for North Charleston began, Rhett had traveled widely, both as a businessman and as mayor of Charleston, and had without a doubt
come in contact with a wide range of urban development initiatives. This would have included improvements embodied by the City Beautiful movement as well as the design elements, or the lack thereof, embodied in new urban industrial cities such as Anniston, Pullman, Gary, and Fairfield. Moreover, he had been intimately involved in City Beautiful projects in Charleston such as the Exposition and The Boulevard project. It is also highly likely that Rhett would have been familiar with Howard's work and though there is no evidence that he traveled to Europe, he would have undoubtedly known of new developments like Letchworth, and would have been attracted to its combination of agricultural and industrial activities. Both of these elements—City Beautiful design aesthetics and the industrial and agricultural opportunity embodied by the Garden City—can be seen in his vision of a new town on Charleston's Neck.

Though Rhett was the visionary of the planned city of North Charleston, he was not the only member of Charleston's “boni” involved in the project. The News and Courier described, in a 1913 Special Edition promoting Charleston's links to the Panama Canal, the members of Charleston’s elite involved in the project:

The one man above all others to whom the vast scheme of North Charleston owes its conception and wonderful progress is Mr. R. Goodwyn Rhett. Ably supporting Mr. Rhett's proposals, Mr. E. W. Durant has been optimistic throughout. Mr. Rhett throws into any great project that he enters such an irresistible volume of dynamic energy and enthusiasm that his associates cannot but catch his spirit and work along with him with kindred eagerness. In any development requiring the outlay of large sums of money before a cent can be derived in return, there are necessarily moments when the promoters pause and wonder just how the project can ever result successfully. It is in these moments that Mr. Rhett's optimism and vigor sweep away all objections and obstacles and carry the work on with redoubled ardor. Serving largely as a balance wheel to the fiery energy of Mr. Rhett, Mr. Montague's cool and careful calculating business judgment subjects every proposal to the test of business advisability and Mr. Buist's expert legal opinion assures the legal status of the proposition. Essential also to the success of the undertaking has been the hustling business management and engineering skills of Mr. James O'Hear.182
Robert L. Montague is an enigmatic figure in the early decades of the 1900s. Born in Virginia in 1869, he came to South Carolina at the age of 17 and gained considerable wealth in the lumber business. Montague moved to Charleston in 1902, where he became involved as an investor in various business enterprises, including People’s National Bank. Unlike Rhett, who in 1920 had only one servant—a cook—to assist his wife and two children, Montague lived ostentatiously, and his household included a butler, a nurse for his children, and a cook. Montague’s household also included numerous cousins working in some capacity in the lowcountry lumber business. Though Montague was considered “active both in the business and social life” of Charleston, his name seldom appeared in the local papers, and he did not take an active role in the political activities of the city. One observer noted that Montague preferred to work behind the scenes, and his role in the founding of North Charleston was through the provision of investment capital for the project to People’s Bank and in the handling of the purchase of the North Charleston property from Burton Lumber Company, to which he had extensive ties.

Each of the other players had a significant role to play in the creation of North Charleston. Born in Minnesota, Edward W. Durant was an 1887 graduate of Yale University who had arrived in Charleston in 1904, drawn, like Montague, by the lumber business as represented by his association with Burton Lumber Company. Durant never amassed the great wealth of Rhett and Montague, and his role in founding North Charleston was largely as marketer and promoter of the development. It is likely, for instance, that the boosterish 1913 article in the Special Edition of the News and Courier
was his handiwork, which would account for his prominent placement in the quote cited above.

Henry Buist and Tristram T. Hyde had more limited roles in the development. Buist, also a Yale graduate (1884) who considered himself a disciple of the sociologist William Graham Sumner, was a prominent Charleston attorney who served as the legal advisor to the various corporations developing North Charleston.\textsuperscript{189} Hyde was a prominent Charlestonian involved in real estate and insurance who was a close friend of Rhett’s. Hyde was Rhett’s choice to succeed him as mayor, and though he lost the first time he ran in 1911, he was elected to one stormy term in his second run for the office in 1915.\textsuperscript{190} Hyde’s role in North Charleston was largely based on his experience in real estate and home building, as illustrated by his election in 1912 as president of the South Carolina Building and Loan Association.\textsuperscript{191}

Another key figure in the creation of North Charleston was James O’Hear, the General Manager of the vast project and the man charged with implementing Rhett’s vision. O’Hear, a lowcountry native and a graduate of Wofford College, was a self-taught land surveyor who gained wealth and prominence in the Charleston area due to his skill at locating phosphate deposits.\textsuperscript{192} He sold his family’s 5,000 acre Wando River plantation in 1907 and moved to Charleston, where he was involved in numerous land development projects. He also became closely tied to Rhett’s initiatives, such as The Boulevard project. Rhett was closely involved early in this project, drawing the 1909 plan for the new lots that would be created by the construction of the new seawall. The relationship with the project was ongoing, as shown in a 1910 letter in which Rhett responds to an O’Hear missive which laid out his terms for further involvement in The Boulevard project.
Boulevard project by “accept[ing] the terms of your letter, and request[ing] that you do
this work as quickly as possible, beginning with the tracing of the present map.”¹⁹³ Six
months later, Rhett called on O’Hear again because Rhett had received “a print of the
proposed development of marsh areas along Ashley River as made by Messrs. Olmsted
Bros. I would be very much obliged if you would take a look at it in my office, and let
me know if you cannot so color it as to let me ascertain which lots belong to the City
and which to various property owners. . . .”¹⁹⁴ O’Hear, in fact, was so deeply involved
in the project that Olmsted Brothers offered to “send prints of our plans to Mr. O’Hare
(sic) in their present condition” for his review and comment.¹⁹⁵ O’Hear was also active
in the Chamber of Commerce and played a part in a less than successful moral crusade
during the Hyde administration to clean up “photoplays” in the city, with O’Hear
serving on a “board of censors to pass on motion pictures in Charleston. . . .”¹⁹⁶

O’Hear clearly had Rhett’s trust and respect, and thus was tasked as the General
Manager of the North Charleston project to oversee the overall development. O’Hear
was responsible for the day to day construction operations, including the laying of
streets, power lines, water lines, bridges, and other infrastructure improvements.
O’Hear in all likelihood completed the topographic survey of the 5,000-acre property
which was used to plan the new city and as a certified land surveyor signed the
subdivision plats which became the basis for the extraordinary development of North
Charleston.

The founders of North Charleston were all representative of the elite leadership
of the city and were either members of or closely allied to the merchant and planter
class that dominated Charleston’s economic, political, and social life. All of the major

¹⁹²
players in the new city lived within the close confines of the peninsular city and many were members of the same clubs, active in the Chamber of Commerce, and linked through political ties. In addition, Rhett, Buist, and O'Hear were active in Charleston’s Episcopal Church, which was one of the most socially prominent congregations in the city. These men represented the elite leaders of lowcountry society, and with the inspiration of Rhett’s vision they would to build a new city on Charleston’s Neck.

The Planner

Robert Goodwyn Rhett required a planner to implement his vision, and despite his experience with the Olmsted firm in the planning of Chicora Park as well as The Boulevard project, he elected to use another firm. The firm he chose was the P.J. Berckmans Company of Augusta, Georgia, probably the oldest landscape architecture firm in the South. The Berckmans Company was owned by the Berckmans family, which also owned and operated Fruitland Nurseries, the most prestigious nursery in the South and one of the largest operations in the United States.  

The Berckmans family arrived in the United States from Belgium in the aftermath of the revolutions that swept Europe in the late 1840s. The family patriarch, Dr. Louis Mathieu Eduard (L.M.) Berckmans, had been a distinguished botanist and horticulturist in his native land who, the story goes, sent his eldest son Prosper Julius Alphonse (P.J.) to America to scout locations for a family business in 1850. One site P.J. visited after his arrival in New York was a colony of Belgians located near Rome, Georgia. L.M. Berckmans, recently arrived from Belgium, summoned his son to Philadelphia in 1851 and, “within a few months he settled in Plainfield, New Jersey, a site near the center of American horticulture as well as near the homes of Charles and
Andrew Jackson Downing, world famed for their monumental studies of plans and shrubs. There too P.J. married... became a United States citizen, and assisted the Downings in revising their standard work on the *Fruits and Fruit Trees of America*.”

The story that has been passed down concerning the purchase by L.M. and P.J. Berckmans of a small nursery and a manor house outside Augusta, Georgia in 1857 is based on the understanding that “the climate of New Jersey proved too rigorous for Berckmans and his work.” It seems likely, however, that there were economic reasons as well that drew the family South on the brink of the Civil War, linked to the relative dearth of nurseries in the region and the demand for horticulturist services on the sprawling plantations. As the Berckmans family noted in the Fruitland Nurseries catalog in 1912, the family “conceived the idea of establishing, in this section of Georgia, a nursery that should be a source of supply for all the trees and plants required by the people of the Middle South. In those days the science of horticulture had made little progress, especially in the South; the man who started in the nursery business was obliged to cut his own paths, and by actual trials prove what varieties were adapted to southern conditions.”

The Berckmans family may have also looked to successful South Carolina horticulturist and nurseryman William Summer for inspiration. Summer’s operation, called Pomaria, was one of the largest nurseries in the Carolina upcountry and he was well-known to A.J. Downing. Summer, like the Berckmans, was deeply involved in pomology, the horticulture of fruit trees, and his nursery may have served as a model for what was to become the largest nursery operation in the South.
Led now by the son P.J. (Figure 4.6), the family moved its operation to Augusta and “named the nursery ‘Fruitlands’ and began importing, selecting, and distributing the greatest variety of trees, plants, and shrubs ever seen in the South. And so successful were [P.J.] Berckmans efforts that within three years—when he was still only thirty—he was the most famous horticulturist in the South.”

Figure 4.6
P. J. Berckmans, Sr. and Wife, circa 1910

Fruitland Nurseries grew rapidly. At the time of its founding it covered around twenty-five acres, but within four years “Fruitland listed in its catalogue more than 1300 varieties of pears, 900 of apples, 300 of grapes, and 100 each of azaleas and camellias.” By the 1870s, having survived the depredations of the Civil War relatively unscathed, the operation covered one hundred acres. By 1900, “Fruitlands was at its height, comprising a total of 500 acres with 100 acres in ornamentals, 50 in
roses, 20 in grapes, 20 in test orchards, 3 under slat and cold frames, large areas in shade, fruit, and nut trees, and 60,000 square feet under glass. Few nurseries in the nation and none in the South were comparable.  

Around 1870 L.M. Berckmans turned over the reins of the entire family business to his son P.J. and retired to a mountain cabin where he lived alone in “a comfortable little 12-by-15-foot, one-room cottage, constructed of stone and wood... surrounded [by]... an enclosed wall for walking and protection against the cold winds, three tiered terraces for flowers and a long stone wall that supported a cold frame.” P.J. Berckmans was, like his father, a renowned horticulturist. He was active in promoting new crops in the South in an effort to spur agricultural diversification. He was also renowned “for the manner in which Berckmans used his nursery [and] made it vastly more than a successful commercial establishment. When he established Fruitlands the art of developing new fruits was limited to a few amateurs who distributed seedlings to friends.” Berckmans would change this by introducing scientific principles of budding and grafting “in an effort to introduce new varieties of flora” into the South. Berckmans was well known “For his work in originating, introducing, improving, or disseminating the South’s most famous varieties of peaches... [and] became recognized as the ‘father of peach culture in the South.” Berckmans, however, was interested in more than just peaches, and “introduced into the South, or was instrumental in disseminating, many other fruits and ornamentals—the Kelsey plum, Japanese persimmon, hardy lemon, kumquat, the sand pear tribe and its hybrids, the Citrus trifoliate... , and the Amur privet or Ligustrum amurense now found all over North America—and many others. His importations of many varieties of azaleas and

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camellias from Belgium, Germany, France, and Japan did much to popularize those two plants in the South, and his roses became famous throughout the region.210

The Berckmans family and Fruitland Nurseries became pre-eminent in Southern horticulture. P.J. Berckmans had three sons, Louis Alphonse (born 1857), Robert Craig (born 1864) and P.J.A. Jr. (born 1866), all of whom were involved in the nursery operation.211 Both Robert and P.J.A. Jr., called “Allie,” began attending the University of Georgia in 1880, but neither of the men graduated from the University. Both Louis and Robert were landscapers, while Allie managed the financial affairs of the nursery. The three sons were supportive of the work of their father, who continued to build his reputation as a horticulturist, serving as president from 1887 to 1897 of the American Pomological Society and correspondent for several French horticulturist societies, traveling to Europe at the request of the United States government to gather plant species, and presiding over the Horticulturist Congress in Chicago in 1893, which brought him in contact with the landscape architecture and planning activities of the World’s Columbian Exposition.212

In 1898 the family formed the P.J. Berckmans Company to operate the nursery and engage in related activities. These activities included a growing landscape architecture and planning operation, representing the first firm in the American South to offer these services. As described in the 1907-08 Fruitland Nurseries catalog,

For over twenty-six years we have made the ornamentation of city and residential parks, cemeteries, mill villages, private estates, etc., one of the features of our business; but within the last few years the demand for this class of work has grown to such an extent that we found it necessary to add a department of landscape gardening to our business, placing in charge of this department one of the members of our firm. Recently, in view of the continued and marked increase in the demand for landscape work, we have found it necessary to employ additional expert engineers, draftsmen and plantsmen, who,
acting under our personal direction, and being familiar with road making, grading, draining, laying out and planting grounds, will execute any work entrusted to us in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.\textsuperscript{213}

In the following season's catalog, the company noted that in the Landscape and Engineering Department "a permanent force of Engineers, Landscape Architects, Gardeners and Planting Foremen are employed under the direction of Mr. Robert C. Berckmans."\textsuperscript{214}

By the 1913-14 season, the P. J. Berckmans Company, Landscape Architects, proclaimed that "Until recent years, the Profession of Landscape Architecture has not been well understood by the general public. People have not fully realized the opportunity for artistic design in the laying out of the grounds around their homes, clubs, or public buildings. But, with the growth and maturity of the country has come a fuller knowledge of the advantages and pleasures that follow the careful study and execution of such problems. As a result, the work of the Landscape Architect is now recognized by people of intelligence, as an invaluable asset in the arranging of their grounds for service and beauty."\textsuperscript{215} With its expertise in the field established, the company "respectfully offers its services as Landscape Architects to owners of large or small private estates, Park Commissions, Civic Improvement Societies, and other Institutions or persons interested in the laying out of land for utility and beauty."\textsuperscript{216} The company offered a wide range of services, including "the making of surveys, reports, designs and specifications for the development of large country estates, small suburban or city home grounds (the small place often needs the more careful handling), formal or informal gardens, garden accessories, such as garden houses, pergolas, sun dials, and fountains, the grounds of country clubs, educational institutions, public buildings, parks
and parkways, cemeteries, play grounds and land sub-divisions. It is prepared also give advice upon forest culture and the problems of city planning.™

In the 1915-16 season’s Fruitland Nurseries Catalog, the Berckmans Company proudly declared that “The men who have charge of this work have had the best of technical training in the Schools of Landscape Architecture in Harvard University and in the State College of Pennsylvania; and have traveled extensively in this country and abroad for the purpose of studying the best work in landscape design.”™ In the 1917-18 Catalog, the Berckmans Company expanded its expertise to include “the planning of new industrial villages, the improving of old ones, and... the laying out of land subdivisions. In all of these, the most advanced ideas in City Planning are followed.”™

The P.J. Berckmans Company was involved in numerous planning projects across the South.™ One of the first town planning projects which the firm completed was the mill village of Shawmut, Alabama, planned in 1905. Located across the border from Columbus, Georgia, Shawmut was a textile mill town planned for a few hundred families in the valley of the Chatahoochee River for the West Point Manufacturing Company. The company had employed “a landscape architect [Berckmans]... to design the new village. The plans called for the town to be built after the pattern of a wheel, with streets radiating from a hub... Thus Shawmut became the first planned village in The Valley.”™ The focus of the plan was a circular park space, and other parks and playgrounds were situated throughout the small village, providing some limited amenities to the workers and their families.

Though it is unclear who drew the plans for Shawmut, P.J. Berckmans’ middle son Robert was in charge of the operation and probably directed the plan, and Louis, the
eldest son, may also have been involved as he was in later plans. William H. Kessler, who had been trained in landscape architecture by the Berckmans, was in all likelihood also involved in the Shawmut plan. The basic plan for Shawmut—a central feature with streets radiating outward and surrounded by an outer roadway called “The Boulevard”—represents a morphological signature that appears in other towns planned by the Berckmans firm.

The P.J. Berckmans Company was also involved in the planning for Fairfield, the planned industrial city outside of Birmingham. Though they were not involved in the design work for the new city, Kessler moved to Birmingham in 1912 as the company’s representative to assist in the landscaping work for the project. After working for a few months as the company’s on-site representative, Kessler left the employ of the Berckmans Company, working for several local nurseries before establishing himself as a landscape architect, designing many of the city’s most prominent residential neighborhoods.

With Kessler’s departure in 1912, the Berckmans Company required the services of a new landscape architect. The firm looked north to Harvard University and hired William Bell Marquis, a recent graduate from the Department of Landscape Architecture. Shortly after graduation in June of 1912, Marquis moved South, in all likelihood becoming the first professionally trained landscape architect to permanently reside in the region.

William Bell Marquis was born in Rock Island, Illinois in 1887. He was the son of a locally prominent Presbyterian minister, and after graduation from high school attended Lake Forest College, a small Presbyterian educational institution founded in
1856. The town of Lake Forest, situated on the banks of Lake Michigan, was established by Presbyterians from the Midwest searching for a location for an institution of higher education, and the plan for the town incorporates the new planning ideals of Olmsted and Vaux, representing one of the earliest applications of these principles, with its curvilinear streets and green spaces, to an urban residential area that was largely devoted to an educational institution.²²⁵

Figure 4.7
William Bell Marquis, 1909

It was into this environmentally rich and stimulating setting that Marquis came in 1905, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1909, majoring in Mathematics and Physics (Figure 4.7). Marquis was in the Glee Club all four years, ran track, was class president his junior year, and received a distinguished service citation from the College’s governing board.²²⁶ While at Lake Forest College, Marquis developed a
strong landscape aesthetic, and as he wrote three years after graduation, while at the
College he relished “the opportunity . . . of observing and studying the various methods
and factors by which Lake Forest is made, what it is well known to be, one of the most
attractive residence suburbs in this country.” Marquis, however, did not “presume to
say that the average student in Lake Forest does not realize and enjoy its many beauties.
On the contrary, we feel sure that he does appreciate its attractions and that, in after
years, the memories of its beautiful campus, the wooded ravines and shores, the
winding drives and paths and charming homes and school buildings linger in mind,
quite as distinctly as the recollections of the class room . . . .”

During his years at Lake Forest, Marquis had in all likelihood been well aware
of the diverse planning activities associated with the Chicago area, including Riverside,
Pullman, and Gary. Clearly, however, the small, well designed community of Lake
Forest made the greatest impression on his developing landscape aesthetic and his belief
in the role of the environment in shaping the human condition: “But it may be said
‘Lake Forest is a beautiful place naturally. All that has been necessary in building it up
is that the natural beauty be preserved.’ A careful consideration of facts, however,
shows that this statement is not entirely true—that together with this preservation of
natural beauty there has been combined artistic planning. It is to this work of artistic
planning, called landscape designing, that we wish to call attention. It is the means by
which man has combined art with nature, giving, as a result, a unified and beautiful
whole.”

After graduating from Lake Forest College, Marquis entered the Master’s
program in the School of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University. In his first
year in the program Marquis did well, though his lack of artistic training was a problem in his drawing classes, such as Freehand Drawing in which he received a grade of “B” and Elementary Drafting in which he received a “C.” During this period he was also a member of the Harvard Glee Club, traveling with the troupe and utilizing a wonderful baritone voice that he had honed at Lake Forest.  

In the summer of 1910, after completing his first year at Harvard, Marquis traveled to Europe with his younger brother Stewart, joining his parents and younger sister in Liverpool. Marquis’ parents had been given a “world tour” by a grateful congregation, and his father was speaking at a World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh. Marquis toured England, Scotland, Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, and returned home from Italy. Though Marquis’ exact itinerary is difficult to reconstruct, the budding landscape architect assuredly took advantage of his European visit to investigate the planning principles emerging in both England and the continent based on Howard’s Garden City model, represented by planned communities like Letchworth, Hampstead Garden Suburb, and Hellerau, outside Dresden, one of the cities Marquis visited in Germany.

Marquis was clearly affected by the possibilities of a new urban future, based on both his experiences in Europe as well as in America. After observing first hand the new urban developments in England and the continent based, Marquis wrote approvingly that the benefits of an improved environment through landscape design were not restricted to the wealthy but could “be used equally well in places of modest development—a fact that has been conclusively proven in the so called ‘Garden Cities
and Suburbs,' such as Post (sic) Sunlight and Hampstead in England and, more recently, in places in our own country such as 'Forest Hills Gardens’ on Long Island, N. Y.\textsuperscript{232}

Marquis' academic performance in subsequent years at Harvard was strong. His grades were generally above average, with the exception of his classes in drawing, which continued to be weak.\textsuperscript{233} Marquis received his training under some of the greatest names in landscape architecture, including H. V. Hubbard, James S. Pray, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. His conceptual abilities as to the opportunities embodied by landscape design, as well as his firm grounding in the elements of horticulture, would serve him well in his career as a professional landscape architect.

Marquis' Master's thesis, entitled "The Location, Design, and Equipment of Public Playgrounds" was submitted in February 1912, and illustrates his keen interest in this aspect of the City Beautiful movement. Though the text was somewhat workmanlike, the summary of his views of the movement and of the importance of playgrounds clearly presents his thinking of the important role that design can play in the improvement of the human condition:

To summarize briefly what has been said, we have seen (1) that the movement for public playgrounds in the United States has recently had phenomenal (sic) growth because of the recognized beneficial influence of these institutions on the moral, physical, and social life of people of all classes; (2) that a city which desires to establish a playground system should first make a comprehensive plan to follow by first discovering all areas within the city which may be available for playcenters and then choosing such of these as may best suit the requirements, endeavoring to have a play area in the center of each square mile of the city's territory, and more frequently if possible; (3) that the design of the playground should be largely formal but that, where room permits, there may be a small park-like area developed with more informality; that the elements of the design should be compactly arranged so as to best utilize all space and give ease in the matter of supervision and control; (4) that landscape treatment has its place in the playground so long as it does not interfere with its efficiency as a play area; and (5) that extent of equipment for the playground is governed by the environs of the city, the size of the area, classes to be served, and funds available, and that

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the importance of equipment is determined by the safety of operation, intrinsic attractive qualities, that is, its ability to stimulate imagination and thought or to give physical development, the number of people which may use it at one time, its complexity, and the amount of supervision required to make it efficient, and always the expense of construction and maintenance.\textsuperscript{234}

Though the thesis as submitted received critical comments from department chair James S. Pray (i.e. “no bibliog. appendix”; “no illustrations, plans, diagrams, etc.”; “source of equipment list?”), and comments in the margins drew attention to the numerous typographical errors as well as topics that required expansion, the thesis was accepted, and on June 20, 1912 Marquis was awarded the degree of Master of Landscape Architecture.\textsuperscript{235}

With his Lake Forest and Harvard academic experiences and his travels abroad, by 1912 Marquis had developed a mature landscape design aesthetic based firmly in the Progressive Era planning ideals drawn from the Garden City and the City Beautiful. Marquis called attention to “artistic planning, called landscape design,” and fully believed it to be “the means by which man has combined art with nature, giving, as a result, a unified and beautiful whole.”\textsuperscript{236} Marquis, as a young landscape architect, was imbued with the idea that landscape design could improve lives, and believed that the world was “living in an age that is seeing great advances made in civic improvement. Within the past few years, more than a score of cities in our country have prepared plans for improving general living conditions and making the city, as a whole, more beautiful. The improvement and extention (sic) of park systems and the laying out of additions to the city in an artistic manner, have been features in all of these places.”\textsuperscript{237} Marquis subscribed to the Progressive Era notion of the practical effects of the uplifting power of the environment through planning and design, noting that “The motives which
have prompted the creation of these plans have not been aesthetic alone. It is now a universally recognized fact that, where people live and work among attractive surroundings, they accomplish better results and lead better and broader lives."

After graduation in June of 1912 and with a strong letter of recommendation in hand from Harvard University, Marquis secured a position with the P.J. Berckmans firm. It is unclear why Marquis elected to go South, if there was a connection between Marquis and the Berckmans family or if he simply new of the famous Fruitland Nurseries through his studies. A personal connection may have come through Robert Craig Berckmans, the middle son of P.J., who was active in the Presbyterian Church, serving on the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian National Association in the early 1900s. Regardless, Marquis was hired as a landscape architect and moved to Augusta after June, and by 1914 had been named office manager with the responsibility of all landscape design work. He became involved in local community organizations such as the Augusta Rotary Club, and was probably considered one of the many up and coming young men of the growing city.

Immersed in the practical problems of managing an operation involved in town planning, park planning, landscape design for residential and other uses, and other services, Marquis’ ideas of the principles of landscape architecture began taking on a more utilitarian, somewhat less artistic bent (Figure 4.8). Presumably he wrote the description of the landscaping services offered in the Fruitland Nurseries catalog after two year with the firm, “The work of the Landscape Architect may be defined as: ‘The arrangement of land, and of the features on that land, for the purpose of utility and beauty.’ This definition at once contradicts the prevailing idea that the work of the
profession is aesthetic solely—that it is the mere embellishment of land after all practical development has been completed. In reality, in landscape designing, problems concerning utility are always the first to be studied; decoration or embellishment being the second consideration.241

Marquis was involved in numerous projects while working for the Berckmans firm between 1912 and 1917, when he left the firm.242 These projects included a plan completed in 1915 for Fairfax Mill Village, a town planned for the West Point Manufacturing Company near Shawmut and employing the Berckmans morphological signature of a central feature with radiating streets with a broad street called “The Boulevard” circling the town.243 In 1917 Marquis completed the landscaping plans for the “Crane Cottage,” a mansion on Jekyll Island built for Richard T. Crane, a wealthy Chicago manufacturer of plumbing fixtures. The cottage and grounds were finished in time for the 1918 “season” on the island and at the time represented, at an investment of
$100,000, "The most expensive cottage ever built at Jekyll." Marquis was also involved in a project for the estate of Fuller E. Callaway of LaGrange Georgia for which he completed a lengthy report "on the improvement and maintenance of [his] residence property, [though] it is to be understood that recommendations, in such for, can be made in a general way only, since it is very difficult to designate specific locations without the use of plans made from surveys and drawn to scale. . . ." for which Callaway was apparently unwilling to pay. Marquis worked on other Georgia residences as well as on "plans for certain sections of Piedmont Park." site of the sprawling Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta that the city was converting into a suburban park based on a 1912 design by Olmsted Brothers.

Marquis' largest project for the Berckmans Company, and the one that drew together his interests in the Garden City and the City Beautiful, was undoubtedly his work on North Charleston. It is unclear why Rhett turned to the P.J. Berckmans Company to design his new town, because there is no indication that the company had done any work of note in the South Carolina lowcountry prior to this project. In fact, the only contact appears to have been a letter, sent by Kessler for the Berckmans Company to Rhett in 1911 inquiring about plans of which the company had gotten wind to open "to the public as a park and playground" Faber Place, an old plantation site on Charleston's Neck. The plans for the tract as reported in a 1912 article in the Charleston newspaper included "the building of a pretty little cottage. . . in exquisite taste and in keeping with the attractiveness and dignity of the place. . . . The ornamentation of the grounds will receive special attention. The planting of shade, garden and fruit trees will also be carefully looked after. Shade trees of different
varieties and others, like the palmetto, shrub and opoponax, will find place in the proper spots." Kessler, writing for the company prior to the official announcement, decided to "take the liberty of offering our services as Landscape Architects, and will be glad to serve you in our capacity whenever you have need of such services." The elaborate plans for Faber Place never materialized.

For whatever reason, Rhett elected to utilize the services of the Berckmans Company, and in 1912 entrusted his vision of a new town on Charleston Neck to the firm from Augusta. Thus, in 1912 the visionary was matched with the planner, and William Bell Marquis, only recently graduated from Harvard University, was given the task of translating Rhett’s vision of a new urban environment into a working plan. Drawing on his skills as a landscape architecture and his knowledge of Progressive Era planning ideals as represented by Howard’s Garden City and Robinson’s City Beautiful, Marquis began designing Rhett’s city, the first New South Garden City. It was to be an urban environment that would draw together both agricultural and urban industrial activities into a new environment, propelling Charleston and the South Carolina lowcountry into a new future.

The Plan

After the initial excitement of the announcement in September 1912, the developers elected to “keep mum” about the details of the huge enterprise. According to the News and Courier, the “Officers of the three companies [North Charleston Corporation, Charleston Farms Corporation, and North Charleston Water and Light Company] receded from the decision arrived at a few days ago to make a public statement of their plans regarding the North Charleston development and no such public
statement will be made for publication by the officers of the three companies in the near
future. It was stated that the time was not ripe for such a statement and that work at
North Charleston had not yet reached such a point as to render such a statement
advisable.\textsuperscript{249}

Rhett and his partners, in developing their plans for North Charleston, examined
the prospects of the lowcountry and of the Charleston Neck and arrived at a number of
“facts.” As enumerated by the \textit{News and Courier}, these “facts stood out clearly.” to
wit:

First, in a long narrow peninsula traffic conditions will become
inevitably congested in proportion to the increase of business, if all business is
still conducted from the extremity of the peninsula.

Second, deep water conditions prevailing up above the narrow neck of
the peninsula make possible the transfer of business from the railroads to
coastwise and oceanic ships, without ever entering the peninsula, thus avoiding
the congestion and cutting both the rates and the time of transportation.

Third, abundant space for new factories can thus be provided along the
tracks of the railroads adjacent to their terminals, without the slightest crowding,
owing to the vast stretch of land included in the development. As a corollary of
this fact, space is also provided for factory villages, where the employees of
these concerns may not be subjected to the fearful tenement conditions
prevailing in nearly all important centres, but may here enjoy rural conditions,
such as owning their own small farms and may be offered advantages which
would never be possible if all this business were to be cramped within the limits
of the peninsula.

Fourth, with an elevation of thirty-five feet in a perfectly drained
pineland country, developed with beautiful parks and given every advantage
which a new and healthy suburban territory could possibly have. North
Charleston will be an ideal home for suburban residences, combining the
pleasure of living in elevated pinelands comparable to Summerville and the
speedy access to Charleston by trolley lines or automobiles.

Fifth, and rounding out the proposition into a well balanced unified
scheme, there are 3,500 acres of superb farming lands adjacent to North
Charleston on the northern side, forming, in fact, an integral part of the
development, where experimental farming will be conducted to demonstrate to
all farmers who come to purchase farms prepared for them there just exactly
what results can be obtained from every kind of crop on a farm which is of
identically the same character as their own, so that their labor may not be done
aiming to merely conjectural results, but that them may have all the information and help that science can bring to their very doors.\textsuperscript{250}

It was clear from its inception that the project was planned to be a large development with two fundamental components: factory sites in a new urban area called North Charleston and small family farms in an adjacent development called Charleston Farms. Industrial and agricultural activities were to be developed jointly in an urban form that drew on Progressive Era planning principles as embodied by Howard and Robinson. More fundamentally, however, in its juxtaposition of urban industrial activities and small farmers, the plans for the development of Charleston's Neck were firmly grounded in Kropotkin's industrial village as translated by New South Progressive capitalists, creating a new urban form which sought to link the South's traditional agricultural sector with its growing industrial sector. The planning for this bold vision represents an important moment in the development of the urban South. As a promoter of New South industrial schemes noted, “We have heard the call of North Charleston, and we have realized that it is the Call of Opportunity. . .”\textsuperscript{251}

In September 1912, as the first word was spreading of the project, the plans for the new city of North Charleston were in all likelihood on Marquis' drawing board at the P. J. Berckmans Company. Rhett's vision for the new city included residential areas, factory sites, commercial areas, parks and plazas, and school sites, all of which were in the Marquis plans. In the spirit of the capitalists of the Progressive Era, which served to intensify the growing class and racial segregation of urban areas, the planned city was zoned into residential, commercial, and industrial areas, with the residential areas further zoned into high, medium, and lower class housing districts. Also in the spirit of the times, the three residential zones carried restrictive covenants to control the
course of development. African Americans were to be restricted in terms of residential possibilities, though in a somewhat more progressive approach than was evident at other planned cities. Thus the new city envisioned by Rhett and Marquis began to emerge in 1913.

The Marquis plan which gave expression to Rhett's vision of the new city of North Charleston incorporated many of the elements of the ideals of Progressive Era planning (Figure 4.9). The design of the plan drew on the aesthetics of the City Beautiful in an effort to create a new environment which included both formal and informal landscape design features that would elevate the sensibilities and moral character of the population. In addition, the social plan of the new city was based on the emerging principles of industrial capitalism, which sought to spatially separate races and classes to create a sense of social control. In this new environment, there would be opportunities for all—including African Americans—though these opportunities would be geographically separate and distinct.²⁵²

From its inception, the 1,500-acre development was intended to be a fully functioning city, with a full range of land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial activities (Table 4.1). In addition, the Marquis' plan for the new city had to incorporate parks, schools and other public buildings, roads, and railways. The distribution of space devoted to each land use indicates the emphasis placed on each activity and provides a beginning to an understanding of the vision incorporated in the Rhett and Marquis plan.²⁵³
As is typical of a city, a large percentage of the property is given over to infrastructure. Twenty three percent of the planned city was taken up by roadways, and
Table 4.1

North Charleston
Planned Distribution of Land Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Buildings</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroads</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1469</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s calculation from Marquis, "General Plan."

another four percent by railroad rights of way. The roadways for North Charleston included broad 120’ wide avenues as well as smaller 60’ wide residential streets. In terms of rail lines, the plan included rail yards and a passenger rail station in the heart of the city.

In terms of other uses, by far the largest activity was taken up by residential property, which accounted for around 47 percent of the acreage in the new city. Industrial uses, labeled as “factory sites” on the plan, were also a significant activity, occupying seventeen percent of the city. Parks and public spaces take up a significant portion of the city, suggesting the influence of the City Beautiful and the Garden City movements, while public buildings represent a much smaller activity. Commercial uses represent an activity that is spatially small but very significant in creating a fully functioning urban place.

The distribution of land uses in the Marquis plan compares favorably with contemporaneous plans. The basic land use of a city is residential area, and by creating
a ratio of other land uses and the amount of residential acreage the intensity of each activity can be measured. The ratio of commercial to residential land in the plan for North Charleston is roughly the same as for several other planned cities and communities, with the exception of Fairfield which was poorly planned in terms of commercial space, with “approximately twice as much business frontage . . . as is needed for the . . . population.” In terms of park and open space, the Marquis plan compares favorably with other planned communities, containing, for example, appreciably more park space than the Olmsted planned community of Forest Hills. Public buildings also compares favorably with other planned communities, and in terms of the ratio between streets and residential activities the plan is economical. The Marquis plan for North Charleston, then, was firmly situated in land use traditions exemplified by other planned communities of the period.

The number of residential lots planned for the new city provides an indication of the projected population Rhett envisioned for his new city on Charleston’s Neck. According to the Marquis plan there were 4,609 residential lots of various sizes planned for the new city. Using a reasonable estimate of five persons per household, the projected population of North Charleston on single family residential lots was 23,045 persons. In addition to these lots, however, there were two mill villages incorporated in the fabric of the plan with an estimated total population of around 1200 persons, bringing the total planned population of North Charleston to 24,245. If built as planned, a city of this size would have been South Carolina’s third largest urban area, behind only Charleston and Columbia, and would have made the South Carolina lowcountry one of the largest urbanized areas in the South.
In terms of physical design of the new city Marquis was faced with a difficult site. Sprawling over nearly 1,500 acres, the North Charleston site was bounded by Filbin Creek to the north, Noisette Creek to the south, and the Cooper River to the east. The Cooper River waterfront was heavily developed with several fertilizer operations, an oil storage facility of the Texas Company, Burton Lumber Company, and a recently constructed operation for the Oakdene Compress and Warehouse Company. This operation, which was part of the cotton export business of Charleston businessman John R. Maybank, was chartered in 1912 with Rhett as its president for “compressing of cotton, and the receiving, warehousing, storing, handling and delivering of cotton and other commodities.”

These industrial operations were linked by spur lines to the main lines of the Southern Rail Line and the Atlantic Coast Line, which crossed the site of the planned city. In addition, the tract was roughly bisected by the trunk line of the Seaboard Airline Railway. These rail lines served to divide the planned city into three sections, each with its own morphology and purpose. The largest area, west of the Seaboard Line, was to be a high quality residential area fringed by factory sites; east of the Seaboard Line was to be a factory site and an adjacent mill village as well as a high class streetcar suburb; the southern part of the planned city, called the Noisette Tract, was intended to be a working class residential district. By examining these three areas the influence of Progressive Era planning principles as embodied by the Garden City and the City Beautiful can be detected, and the elegance and utility of the Rhett and Marquis plan for the new city of North Charleston can be discerned.

West of the Seaboard Airline rail line Marquis utilized the signature Berckmans design, centering the area on a circular park with roadways radiating outward. As the
*News and Courier* described the plan in a 1913 special issue commemorating the opening of the Panama Canal, "The eight great avenues which extend as spokes from the hub of a wheel are in reality but four avenues passing directly through the center and extending in both directions. These avenues are named from (sic) the leading promoters of the enterprise, Rhett, Montague, Durant and Buist avenues."\(^{256}\) The focus of the central park, which was located at the highest point in the new city, was a fountain, and "All the trees within the central park and adjoining parks are so arranged that the vista looking down any avenue from the hub will be perfect, and so that one looking from any point on any avenue will look past the fountain in the centre of the city and right on down miles of the extension of the avenue on the other side of the centre, without having his view interrupted by a single tree in the central park."\(^{257}\)

Marquis adopted a much more formal approach than the Berckmans firm had employed at Shawmut, illustrating the influence of the City Beautiful movement on the plan. In his plan Marquis encircled the central park with a roadway and imbedded the circle in a larger square, creating a geometrically formal 28 acre park at the center of the new city. As the *News and Courier* described the plan, "Around this central park there lies a second concentric circle, which the eight avenues divide into quadrants. These quadrants are all reserved as parks, thus making a splendid park system in the centre of the city."\(^{258}\) This area, called Pinewood Park, was planned to be the most exclusive residential area in the new city, with large lots averaging a sprawling 20,000 square feet, creating an average density of around 2 lots per acre. These lots also carried with them stringent deed restrictions intended to protect property owners. The *News and Courier* noted approvingly that "Around this outer circle, all facing on the parks, will be
choice residence sites. Here, far removed from all factory centres, thirty-five feet above sea level, in the healthiest pineland territory, and facing on a beautiful park system of flowers and fountains, will be ideal sites for the location of suburban homes, where the tired business man may truly be at home, removed from the noise and bustle of business life."

As part of the Berckmans morphological signature, bounding Pinewood Park was a broad curvilinear avenue called "The Boulevard." The roadway included landscaped medians and other amenities, and linked together many school and park sites planned by Marquis. The roadway also served as the boundary for Pinewood Park. and outside The Boulevard the average lot size dropped considerably to around 3,750 square feet, creating an average density of around 12 lots per acre, the maximum density generally associated with Garden City planning. Moreover, the deed restrictions associated with the lots became somewhat less restrictive. This was clearly intended to be middle class housing, with enough planned amenities such as park sites and the nearby schools to offset the planned factory sites on which many of the lots faced.

In addition to the central park, Pinewood Park and the surrounding area included numerous large and small park spaces. In Marquis' Master's Thesis project, he wrote that "there should be a playground in the center, or near the center, of each square mile of the city's territory," though his plan for North Charleston exceeds that rough calculus. One major park area towards the north of the city (Parks S and T) included a small stream that ran north and fed into Filbin Creek. This 36-acre park is the largest park site in the plan, and was probably planned by Marquis to be a less formal, more
“natural” park than the heavily landscaped central park. A third major park site (Park F) was a five acre site centered on another low area that was important to the drainage of the site, and included an impoundment that created a pond site. In addition to these two parks, smaller neighborhood parks and triangular green spaces in the roadways can be found throughout the area.

The plan for this area also included school sites and commercial space. The school sites all have frontage on “The Boulevard,” which would have made pedestrian access to schools in this area relatively easy. A commercial area was planned for the area on Rhett Avenue near its crossing point with the Atlantic Coast Line spur. Another small commercial area was planned for Durant Avenue near its intersection with the ACL main line. These commercial areas were divided into long narrow lots with 25 feet of street frontage, clearly intended to create a traditional “main street” effect. The commercial activities that Rhett envisioned in this area were probably intended to service workers in the nearby factory sites as well as residents of the area.

The plan for the area west of the Seaboard Airline tracks, then, represents a large-scale application of the Berckmans plan, with embellishments by Marquis drawn from the ideals of the City Beautiful. Parks and schools were placed throughout the area, and factory sites were pushed to the edges of the area along the rail lines as in Howard’s Garden City plan. Naturalistic curvilinear streets with landscaped medians were juxtaposed with the formal central park, with its fountain creating an aesthetic focus for the new city. This mixture of formal and informal spaces created a new environment for both an upper and a middle class population, and in many ways encapsulates the ideals of Progressive Era planning.
The area east of the tracks of the Seaboard Airline presented special problems for Marquis. Relatively speaking, it was a narrow tract of land sandwiched between the rail line and the existing industrial concerns along the Cooper River. Because there was no riverfront park in the Marquis plan, apparently Rhett and his partners were unwilling to maintain property they had acquired on the river as permanent park space, which would have provided a focus for this part of the new city. Moreover, prior to planning this section of the new city the developers had contracted a significant portion of the tract to the General Asbestos and Rubber Company (GARCO) of Charleston for a new mill and two separate mill villages for white and black workers. In addition, the path of the electric railway which was to connect the new city with Charleston via the Navy Yard had already been determined. Thus Marquis was working under numerous constraints in terms of designing this part of the city.

In a design that was profoundly influenced by the ideals of the City Beautiful and the Garden City, what emerged from Marquis was a plan for the area focused on a large public square straddling Montague Avenue. This plaza, covering nearly three acres, stands as an aesthetic counterweight to the circular park and centers the area to the west of the tracks. Surrounded by unspecified “public buildings,” presumably a future city hall and possibly a community theater, hospital, museum, library, or police and fire stations, the central plaza represented the civic center of the new city, focusing public space and activity. Adjacent to the plaza was the planned passenger railway station, which included a drive in front of the station flanked by four landscaped park areas. In the plan these landscaped spaces framed the station in such a way as to
separate it from the plaza while drawing travelers down the landscaped walkways to the station.

The extension of Montague Avenue eastward to its terminus at the Oakdene Compress Warehouse Company site was planned to be the commercial core of the city. Designed as a "main street" type of area, with long narrow lots of 20' of street frontage, the three blocks of commercial activity was to serve residents as well as workers in the industrial operations along the Cooper River. The plan called for 104 commercial lots, and in a modern touch the operations were to be serviced by a back alley system that would have reduced service traffic along Montague Avenue.

The plan for the portion of the property north of Montague Avenue was dominated by the mill site for GARCO and its associated worker villages. GARCO began its existence as Charleston Metallic Packing Company in 1895 "to manufacture steam, hydraulic, and other packings used in the mechanic arts," and issued $8,000 in capital stock. In 1910 the company changed its name to the General Asbestos and Rubber Company and issued an additional $125,000 in stock. By 1913, the company was searching for a larger site on which to build a new factory and mill villages for its workers, one for white workers and a separate village for its black workforce, and issued another $375,000 in stock to pay for the new facilities.

With cash in hand, the owners of GARCO looked to the Charleston Neck and the planned city of North Charleston for their site. In light of the growing racial segregation of Southern society during the early decades of the century, Rhett and the owners of GARCO were in agreement that there needed to be separate villages for white and black workers. The village for white workers was nestled into a corner of the

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city east of the rail line, within easy walking distance of the GARCO mill. The village for the African American work force, identified as "Colored Race" in the Marquis plan, was at the northern edge of the city, essentially in the floodplain of Filbin Creek. The street layout of this area is a standard grid of densely packed streets, and was situated nearly half a mile from the main gate of the factory. Nevertheless, the fact that the African American population was included in the fabric of the plan represents a significant advance in New South Progressive Era planning thought, a step that would get pushed back over the course of the development of the city as the stringent segregation of Jim Crow emerged as the dominant model of racial relations.

In the area east of the Seaboard Airline tracks and south of Montague Avenue a very different planning opportunity presented itself to Marquis. The lines of the Consolidated Company connecting North Charleston to Charleston had been planned to terminate at Montague Avenue, providing the opportunity to create a "streetcar suburb" milieu within the new city. Marquis set the tracks in the middle of a broad street, O’Hear Avenue, and designed a picturesque mix of curvilinear and grid streets that takes advantage of the rolling topography of this area and ensures easy access to the streetcar line. Marquis incorporated two triangular shaped parks into the plan for this area as well as a large interior park, which taken together with the public plaza created considerable open space for the residents of this enclave. The average lot size planned for this area was around 6,250 square feet, which provided for a relatively low density development of around seven lots per acre. With its relatively large lots, numerous amenities, and proximity to the streetcar line, this area was clearly intended to be the residence of the managers of GARCO and the other industrial enterprises that Rhett
assumed would soon be locating in his city, as well as professionals working in Charleston who longed for a suburban plot of land far from the city but with easy access to downtown Charleston.

If the area east of the tracks and south of Montague Avenue was intended for the managers of factory operations then the area south of the tracks of the Atlantic Coast Line was decidedly for the factory workers. Called the Noisette Tract because it was placed in the drainage basin of Noisette Creek, which presumably the developers intended to fill, this area was the most densely planned part of the new city. The density of the Noisette Tract was around 12 lots per acre, as was the area outside of Pinewood Park. Unlike the area surrounding Pinewood Park, however, the Noisette Tract included no park space, school sites, commercial activities, or other uses to relieve the crowding. The street layout planned for the Noisette Tract represents a modified grid plan, with very little evidence of the influence of City Beautiful or Garden City ideals that were incorporated into the plans for other parts of the new city. With its close proximity to the Navy Yard, Rhett’s vision for this area as translated by Marquis was based on supplying single family residential lots to Naval Station and Shipyard workers as well as workers for the factories of North Charleston.

With the design for the sprawling city in hand, Rhett and Marquis sought to ensure that North Charleston developed according to plan. To this end they developed a zoning plan for the new city and a set of deed restrictions for the new city (Table 4/2, Figure 4.10). The zoning plan was based on a system which classified each piece of property in the city into “divisions,” based on the emerging planning principles of restricting land use described by Veiller in 1916 as “the dividing up of the city into
districts or divisions on broad lines and the regulating of the character of those districts through laws and ordinances which will prescribe different uses for buildings in different districts. ...” In North Charleston, Division A was reserved for the higher class residential area of Pinewood Park. Division B represented a mixed zone and included the middle class residential area of the city as well as the parks, public buildings, and the commercial space. This was the largest zone, which stands to reason given Rhett’s vision of creating a new environment for the lowcountry’s middle class growing in importance with the growth of industrial capitalism in the New South. For Division C, the bulk of the lots were situated in the Noisette Tract and represented lower class worker housing. Division D was the industrial zone for the new city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s calculation from Marquis, “General Plan.”
Note: Calculations do not include roads and railroads.

The deed restrictions for the new city, recorded with the sale of the first lots in each division, were designed to control development through land use restrictions as well as to provide a measure of security to those purchasing property. Deed restrictions and restrictive or neighborhood covenants were a common feature of planning practice during the Progressive Era, and were utilized to regulate a broad range of property concerns, from minimum building setback lines to minimum house construction values.
A more pernicious use of restrictions, however, was to restrict access to a community or neighborhood by a certain ethnic or in some cases religious group.

Figure 4.10
North Charleston Zone Plan, 1914
North Charleston's deed restrictions were extraordinarily comprehensive, with the tightest restrictions placed upon Division A, the upper class residential area envisioned by Rhett around the central park and bounded by The Boulevard. The restrictions on Divisions B and C were somewhat less constraining, but the developers of the new city were clearly interested in protecting their investment after the property was sold. Though many of the restrictions represent legal boilerplate to protect the interests of Rhett and his associates, taken together they represent the framework of land use control that New South Progressive Era businessmen and planners believed essential to creating a new urban place.

The restrictions for Division A not only represented the tightest restrictions but also established a level of service provision not found in the other Divisions. For example, in Division A, the covenants stated “That after January 1, 1915, the land hereby conveyed shall be liable for and may be charged annually with its proportionate amount of the cost of lighting and keeping in repair the . . . roads, avenues, streets, lanes and parks (including sidewalks) in Pinewood Park, . . . of collecting and disposing of garbage, ashes and rubbish on the land included in said Division A. of cutting and removing the grass and weeds from the vacant and unimproved portions thereof. of maintaining such sewerage systems as may be constructed . . ., of establishing and enforcing such sanitary provisions and regulations as may be useful or beneficial . . ., of policing the same, of furnishing and maintaining such fire protection therein as may be provided by the grantor. . . .”

This service provision based on an annual assessment was only available to property owners in Pinewood Park.
In addition to the possibility of services in the area, Division A was the only part of the new city that carried a restriction on a minimum house value and also went to great lengths to protect the environmental aesthetic of the area. As the restrictions state, "No residence shall be erected on the property hereby conveyed costing less than $3,000, nor shall any building be erected within three feet of the side lines of the lot nor shall any fence, wall or hedge be permitted to grow of a height greater than three feet in front of the building line thereof; nor shall any trees be cut down or destroyed except where necessary for the erection of some building."266

Though Pinewood Park was clearly intended to be a protected enclave with the necessary services to attract a high income population to its park-like setting, both Divisions B and C carried many of the same protections. In all divisions, for example, "No privy shall be erected or used on the property."267 Moreover, all houses in all divisions were to be set back a minimum of 25 feet from the street, with three foot sidelines, ensuring a low density suburban appearance to the new city. In addition, in all divisions "No liquor or ardent spirits of any kind shall be sold upon the property . . . prior to January 1, 1940, without the joint consent of [the North Charleston Corporation] and a majority of the bona fide adult residents."268 The planner and the developers of the city were also clearly interested in maintaining a healthful environment, and instructed purchasers of property throughout the city that "The said property shall be graded or drained by the grantee at his expense whenever in the judgment of the grantor, its succors or assigns, such grading or drainage may be necessary for the purpose of public health. No material with offensive odors or giving off noxious gases shall be kept or manufactured on said property, nor shall any use be
made of said property or any part thereof that shall constitute a nuisance or injure the
value of any of the neighboring properties, no stagnant water, stale garbage, nor any
other unsanitary conditions conducive to the breeding of mosquitoes or flies or
otherwise prejudicial to the public health shall be maintained on said property.\textsuperscript{269} This
basic restriction on activities was augmented for Divisions A and B by adding that "no
cemetery shall be permitted on any part of the property."\textsuperscript{270} For Division A, the
developers felt the need to go even one step further in protecting the aesthetics of
Pinewood Park by expressly adding that "nor shall any hogs be kept thereon."\textsuperscript{271}

In terms of residential use, only Division A was restricted to single family
residences. As the deed restriction noted, "The property hereby conveyed shall not be
used otherwise than for private residence purposes nor shall more than one residence,
with the necessary outbuildings be erected on any one lot, nor shall any apartment
house or tenement house be erected thereon. . . ."\textsuperscript{272} Division B was restricted to private
residence, though this could be changed with "the written consent of the grantor."\textsuperscript{273}
with the exception of the property reserved for commercial activity in the city. The
deed restriction did not forbid apartment or tenements, which presumably could be
located in the Division. For Division C, there was no restriction stating that the
property must be used for private residences, suggesting the developers would be
flexible as to uses in the working class residential area.

With these and other deed restrictions, such as a statement of the rights of the
developers to establish a police force, a sewer system, and other controls, Rhett hoped
to control the physical development of the new city. In addition to the physical plan,
Rhett hoped to ensure that the class structure he envisioned—with Pinewood Park as an

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upper class enclave surrounded by a middle class area, with the working class situated in the less desirable Noisette Tract—would be protected. This class structure was bound up with the issue of racial separation, which was also to be ensured by the deed restrictions for North Charleston.

As has been noted, restrictive covenants and deed restrictions had been employed during the Progressive Era to keep out “undesirable elements” in most new towns and planned suburbs. The restrictions were generally targeted towards ethnic and racial groups, though in certain situations they had been used to exclude religious groups, such as the Jewish population. In new suburban communities such as Forest Hills covenants were designed to “restrict residence . . . to middle-class white Protestants. Everything was to be homogenous at the start . . and would remain so forever.”274 Likewise, in industrial cities such as Pullman and Gary there were restrictions placed on the African American population, and in the New South planned city of Fairfield African Americans were excluded from residing on property in the original planned tract.

For North Charleston, as the News and Courier noted approvingly in 1913, “The region will be, when completed, one of the most healthy resorts in the State, especially in view of the absolute exclusion of negro dwellings beyond the limits of the town.”275 The tortured phrasing notwithstanding, it was clear that the planned city of North Charleston was planned to include only white residents. Despite the newspapers rhetoric, however, in Rhett’s vision there was no “absolute exclusion” of the African American population, as the writer for the News and Courier acknowledged, noting that “the first factory to seek such a site [in the city] was informed that a village for its white
employees could be constructed there, but its negro labor would have to find homes in that portion of the property held by the promoters for this purpose."276

For North Charleston, Rhett's model of segregation appears to draw upon an approach which was fully cognizant of the structure of an urban industrial workforce in which African American workers played a role. This approach could also be seen in contemporaneous new industrial cities such as Torrance, California, in which "the demands of capital precluded urban planners from entirely eliminating either degraded residential environments or nonwhite residents, leaving them to develop new strategies for spatial control... Not able to eliminate the racial division of labor, they established residential areas exclusively for habitation by nonwhite residents."277 This approach, which fit nicely with Rhett's ideals of an opportunity society, was given spatial expression by Marquis in his plan for the city and in deed restrictions placed on the property.

The deed restriction for Pinewood Park stated that "The property hereby conveyed shall not, prior to January 1, 1960, be sold, devised, or donated to any person of the negro race, nor to any corporation whose stock is controlled by the members of the said race nor shall any person of the said race be permitted to rent, lease or to reside on said property..." The restriction provided an out, however, allowing for the restriction to be dropped with "the joint consent of the grantor and a majority of the bona fide adult residents of Division A and upon such terms as may be by them jointly agreed upon..." The restrictions goes on to provide that "any household servant employed on the premises may occupy servants quarters thereon."278
Property in Division B carried the same restriction with the notable alteration of the date of expiration to January 1, 1940. Division C carried the same expiration date as Division B, and in addition explicitly stated that “negroes may have the right to lease or reside on lots in portions of Division C….” The portions of the new city on which African Americans were allowed to live represented some of the least desirable property in the city, most notably the tract marked “Colored Place” in the floodplain of Filbin Creek as well as in limited portions of the Noisette Tract. Still, the inclusion of the African American population within the fabric of the new city and an expiration date of the deed restriction 25 years into the future suggests that Rhett may have been looking to a time of greater integration of the black population in the New South economy. Moreover, the clause providing for the possibility of residence by African Americans elsewhere in the city under the “joint consent” of the developers and the property owners seemed to contain a glimmer of a new era in which white and black populations might find themselves living and working together in a new urban industrial Garden City.

The plan for North Charleston represents a bold effort to build a new city on the Charleston Neck. Drawing on the planning principles of the Progressive Era, including the environmental aesthetics of the City Beautiful and Garden City movements and the class structure of emerging industrial capitalism, the plan for North Charleston is illustrative of a moment in planning history. In and of itself, however, the plan for the city does not create a new urban future, resembling in concept other planned industrial cities of the period. What separates Rhett’s vision for North Charleston from other planned cities was his belief that the industrial and agricultural sectors could be bound
together in a new environment. The plans for Charleston Farms, when linked to the aesthetic and social design for North Charleston, create a new urban form, the New South Garden City.

The founding principle behind Charleston Farms, as reported by Wierse, a writer for the New South promotional magazine *Southern Drainage and Good Roads*, in 1913 was that “anyone working in North Charleston may live upon his own farm. The laborer in the factory, the merchant, or the artisan may till his land for the sake of pleasure, or of profit, or both. Everyone can produce his own vegetables, his own butter and chickens and eggs.” The writer does not make racial distinctions concerning the future farmers of Charleston Farms, and apparently African Americans could be welcomed as tillers of the soil in the agricultural development. He goes on to claim that “There is some splendid pasture available for cattle, and the vicinity of greater Charleston will make the marketing of all produce in excess of the personal needs easy and profitable. It is this plan, of combining agriculture with other business and the facilities for doing it, which has made France and Germany rich, and the population prosperous. We hail this plan with pleasure, because we know it is feasible and will give an opportunity for a broader and fuller and happier life.”

In terms of farming potential, the land for Charleston Farms was seen to be highly productive. The site included a former plantation, Yeamans Hall, which was situated along the banks of Goose Creek, though the balance of the tract was largely in pine forest in the early 1900s. In terms of productive potential, Wierse noted, “Generally speaking, the farm land of North Charleston is a sandy loam with clay subsoil. It is admirably adapted for the growth of truck, oats, corn, cotton, etc. It will
easily bear two and three crops a year. . . . Killing frosts occur so seldom that truck
growing here is even profitable in winter time." Rhett and his fellow developers
went so far as to establish a "model farm," and hired as general manager "Mr. W. D.
Garrison. . . a man of vast experience, and of an enviable reputation as an agricultural
expert." Educated in agricultural techniques at Clemson College, the developers
believed that "A man like Mr. Garrison cannot afford to jeopardize his well-earned
reputation as an agricultural expert. That he accepted the position as Manager for the
Charleston Farms Corporation is significant of the confidence he has in the good results
obtainable from the land in question. He will manage the development of The Farms.
and will stand ready to advise the future settlers upon this tract regarding any matter
they may wish to know, pertaining to the cultivation of their land."  

North Charleston and Charleston Farms, taken together, represent a bold urban
experiment at a time of experimentation. As the News and Courier noted, "the
promoters are, all in one grand scope of development, bringing our railroad and
shipping terminals together where business may be conducted with extreme facility and
expediency and at minimum rates, are providing sites not only for extensive factories
but for villages for their employees, are offering suburban residence sites whose value is
enhanced both by every beautifying means that money can secure and by absolute
segregation of the residences of the races, and are developing the back country in such a
way that it will prove the greatest attraction to farmers to come to our vicinity and the
greatest source of wealth from year to year to those who take advantage of it."  

Thus, with its Garden City inspired linkage of industrial and agricultural
activities, its physical design and division of land uses based on Progressive Era
planning ideals, and its social structure based on the emerging principles of separation of class and race, the development project on Charleston's Neck stands as an ambitious effort to position the South Carolina lowcountry in the forefront of the New South. Of Rhett's vision of a new urban industrial center in the South Carolina lowcountry which incorporated agricultural opportunities for factory workers, "it may be said again without fear of exaggeration that North Charleston is the greatest development project ever undertaken here." 286

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224 *Birmingham News*, 14 February 1966; R.L. Polk & Company, *Augusta City Directory*, 1912; R.L. Polk & Company, *Birmingham City Directory*, 1913; R.L. Polk & Company, *Birmingham City Directory*, 1914; R.L. Polk & Company, *Birmingham City Directory*, 1915; in a 1998 interview with Jim Baggett, Head, Department of Archives and Manuscripts for Birmingham Public Library, it was related that he had no idea where Kessler got his training as a landscape architect; since it was known that he had not been formally trained; most of his training probably came from experience with the Berckmans Company.


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227 William Bell Marquis, "Lake Forest: An Opportunity for Observation," *The Stentor* (Alumni Magazine, Lake Forest College) 26 (1912), 276; Marquis left very little in the way of written description of his philosophy of landscape design and this early exposition represents his fullest account.

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"A NEW TOWN WILL APPEAR ON CHARLESTON NECK":
NORTH CHARLESTON AND THE CREATION
OF THE NEW SOUTH GARDEN CITY

VOLUME II

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

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Chapter 5

“We Propose to Build an Ideal Section of Charleston”

North Charleston did not develop as planned. The subdivision plans for the new city were completed in 1913 but were not legally recorded until September 1914. With the outbreak of war in Europe, this was not a particularly auspicious time to develop a vast agriculture and industrial project in the South. Construction of the new city’s infrastructure developed slowly, delaying sale of residential lots until April 1915, by which time the war raging in Europe had created a measure of economic uncertainty in the South Carolina lowcountry. The ambitious plans for the first New South Garden City had been conceived by Rhett at the high point of the Progressive Era, embodied by the election of Woodwork Wilson in 1912. By the time the plans were completed and property placed on the market, Rhett’s plan “to build North Charleston into an ideal Industrial and Residential Section of Charleston” would run up on the shoals of the first great global conflict of the twentieth century. Development of North Charleston would take a long and troubled road that would eventually include bankruptcy, disgrace, and even suicide.

The development of North Charleston can be divided into three phases. The first phase is initial settlement, after planning for the city was complete, which lasted from 1913 to 1925. During this phase the basic infrastructure for the city was put into place, the first industrial and commercial operations established, and the sale of residential lots commenced. This phase, which incorporates a “pioneer period” between 1915 and 1920 in which the first residents moved to the new city, also includes the first stirrings of a social and cultural life in the new city. The second phase, which lasted
from 1925 to 1940, represents a period of stagnation in terms of development of the sprawling city. During this phase the property was mortgaged to outside investors, and when the developers fell into bankruptcy control of the project passed to northern business interests. The third phase of the development represents a period in which the federal government in various guises constructed large housing projects associated with the burgeoning World War II workforce at the Charleston Navy Base and the Shipyard. This phase, which extends from 1940 to 1945, set the pattern for the eventual build out of the city in the 1950s and 1960s.

The city that emerged from this nearly half century of development bore scant resemblance to the intertwined industrial and agriculture community envisioned by R. Goodwyn Rhett. The contented factory workers laboring on their small plots of land in the warm evenings in Charleston Farms never materialized. Nor did the diverse industries that Rhett and his partners believed would flock to the industrial city of North Charleston. Moreover, at the time the city was envisioned by Rhett and designed by Marquis, no one could imagine the huge impact the federal government would have on a place such as North Charleston, essentially creating a city dependent on the federal government on Charleston's Neck. Still, the threads of the innovative Marquis plan can be seen on the ground, and the faint tracings of Rhett's vision of a new city that "when fully developed will be as attractive as any suburban district of any city," can be discerned in the undulating boulevards and landscaped parks of North Charleston.

"The Most Delightful Suburb in All Southland"

The first announcement of property sales in North Charleston appeared in an advertisement in the News and Courier on April 8, 1915. Under an eye catching "bird's
eye view” of North Charleston showing the Marquis’ street plan with factories and a
train puffing through the new city, the developers trumpeted that “It is with
considerable pride that we announce our readiness to place a limited portion of North
Charleston on the market.”3 The advertisement continues:

First came the task of selecting suitable ground for the building of
Charleston’s choice suburban section. . . . Then came the months and months of
planning and replanning necessary to bring our embryo ideas of an ideal
subdivision up to the point of perfection.

That point of perfection in plans then had to be realized by strenuous
physical labor in the making of streets, the laying of sewers and water mains,
(from the city source,) the installation of electricity and last, but not least, the
provision of suitable transportation for the thousands who will be at once
interested in North Charleston.4

Rhett and his associates had expended tremendous effort and gone to
considerable expense to ready the first New South Garden City. Undoubtedly it was the
largest development project ever undertaken in the lowcountry and quite possibly the
state, with the physical construction of the sprawling new city commencing in 1913.
The sounds of men laboring in the pine forests and in the boggy lowlands echoed
throughout the Neck as the North Charleston Corporation sought to carve a city out of
Charleston’s neglected hinterland.

“The Liveliest Spot in the Neighborhood of This City”

In 1913 the developers reported in the flowing phrases of the New South
Progressives that “The twentieth century . . . always wants to know what people are
actually doing and not what they are thinking of doing. . . . (T)he most inspiring phase
of the entire project is the delightful manner in which the promoters have said little and
sawed wood. . . .”5 During this period, the developers were constructing roadways, “six
miles of clay and gravel roads. . . three of which are already surfaced,”6 as well as other

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infrastructure improvements to ready the site. "When we reflect," the News and Courier reported in 1913, "that an original outlay of some forty-two thousand dollars has been expended, that three thousand have been expended alone in beautifying the grounds with flowers, shrubbery and trees symmetrically planted, we no longer pause to wonder whether North Charleston is an assured fact. We feel at once that we are facing a development of wonderful proportions."  

The roadways for industrial and residential uses were the most significant investment in the city during this early building period, but the creation of a garden landscape was also important to the developers, and was incorporated into the provision of the city's infrastructure. The News and Courier, in a report likely written by the developers themselves, reported in 1913 that "The city of North Charleston proper is being constructed on the plan of the hub and spokes of a wheel. In the centre of the city, at the hub itself, there will be constructed a beautiful circular bowl for the fountain jet, which is already placed there, and where splendid water pressure is secured through water mains, already completed to the heart of the development." The article continued in an admiring tone that "Around this centre there has been constructed a circular park 300 feet in diameter, carpeted with a perfect grass lawn, intersected and surrounded with pebble walks, and beautified with the most luxuriant shrubbery and flowers obtainable." The writer hastened to add that "Mr. L. A. Burkemann (sic), president of the prominent Augusta firm of that name, came to Charleston personally to visit the development. Mr. W.B. Marquis... personally made a close study of the landscape gardening which included the setting out of 3,000 plants so that the whole might have a coherent and unified effect. The beautiful Japanese cypress, or ostrich plume and many
continuous blooming series of plants, the very best that science could recommend, have
been laid out. The scheme of planting the trees was essential to the consummate beauty
of the plan of the city.®

Still, the major improvements to the site involved roadways as well as the
important issue of drainage. Developments on the Neck continued to be burdened with
the belief that it was at best a difficult environment, particularly for the white
population, and at worst a pestilential and disease ridden stretch of territory unfit for
human habitation. The developers, then were quick to proclaim that “The perfect
drainage of the entire city is essential to the health of the district, and recognizing this
the promoters are sparing no expense or trouble to the absolutely perfect drainage of the
entire property.” That the drainage problem was serious is indicated by the developers
proclamation that “There will not be one drop of stagnant water left within the confines
of North Charleston when completed. The dozens of teams employed on the
development have been employed in hauling the earth removed in grading the roads to
the depressions, so that every low spot in the territory is being filled in.” As if to further
bolster the case for the absolute healthfulness of the site, the developers stated
unequivocally that “The entire region is particularly susceptible to perfect drainage
sloping as it does from an elevation of 36 feet at its highest point to creeks passing on
both sides of the city. The promoters have positively refused to allow anyone to build
within the property as yet, as they are determined to put the entire stretch into absolutely
sanitary and healthy condition before anyone moves into it.”9

The rail lines around which the city was planned were already in place in 1913
and provided access and opportunity for development. As described in the News and

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"The railroad tracks skirt the edges of the city, the Atlantic Coast Line to the south and the Southern to the north. Each of these roads are at a distance of 3,000 feet from the centre of the hub, so that their presence will not in any way mar the desirability of the residence sections. Along these roads are the sites of the factories and factory villages." The railroads were advantageously placed to attract industries and their "factory villages" to the new city. In addition, Rhett and his partners assured potential residential occupants of North Charleston that "all passenger trains of the Carolina Atlantic and Western stop at the handsome station of that road, located near Montague Avenue."

To draw the upper class population that Rhett had envisioned for Pinewood Park, however, required the easy access of the streetcar. The delay in extending streetcar lines from Charleston to North Charleston probably more than any other one cause delayed the sale of residential lots in the city until 1915, despite the claim by the developers of waiting until the tract was "absolutely sanitary and healthy." Rhett and his partners had little control over the provision of streetcar service in the Charleston area, a situation that must have been enormously frustrating for the developers of North Charleston.

Streetcar service in Charleston after 1910 was provided by the Charleston Consolidated Railway and Lighting Company. This company leased the lines of the Charleston Consolidated Railway, Gas and Electric Company and operated street railways in Charleston, Mount Pleasant, and Sullivans Island, as well as a steamboat ferry connecting Charleston to Mount Pleasant. As part of its service, the Consolidated Company, as it was known, operated service between Charleston and the
Navy Yard. The company was encouraged to push its line north from the Navy Yard to North Charleston as early as 1913, but work did not commence on the extension until January 1915. The delay, in all likelihood, was due to the caution of the Consolidated Company’s directors, who were undoubtedly more skeptical of the “assured fact” of North Charleston’s success than was the local newspaper. To protect their interests, the Consolidated Company forced the developers of North Charleston to guarantee the streetcar company against any losses for a full five years after extending its line to the sprawling development.¹³

On May 1, 1915, the Charleston Consolidated formally opened its two-mile extension from the Navy Yard to the terminus of the line at the intersection of Montague and O’Hear Avenues. The line, which ran down the center of Cosgrove and O’Hear Avenues, was eagerly anticipated, and the News and Courier breathlessly reported that “the North Charleston extension is said to be the longest suburban line in this section of the South. It has been constructed at a cost of approximately $60,000... In round numbers it is about ten miles from the Battery. From fifty to fifty five minutes will be required to make the trip.”¹⁴ The line was single rather than double tracked, but the developers quickly pointed out to the traveling public and potential investors that “There are several switches along the line... so as to facilitate the passing of cars.”¹⁵

Though no residential property had been sold in the new city prior to 1915, there had been considerable industrial development in the area (Figure 5.1). The first major investment to join Burton Lumber, the Texas Company, and the fertilizer works along the Cooper River was the Oakdene Compress and Warehouse Company. The News and

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The News and Courier, were pleased to declare that

The Oakdene Compresses, wharves and warehouses are a striking development in themselves. Hitherto the wholesale exporting of cotton from Charleston has been somewhat cramped by the lack of space adequate to the actual handling of the volume of cotton. . . . In determining to construct his model plant at North Charleston, Mr. Maybank has proven that he is strictly in line with the progressive and expansive spirit of the new Charleston, and he has provided facilities for handling the yearly increase of the already splendid business of his house. An idea of the extent of this vast construction may be had from the fact that the capacity of the pier and model brick warehouses when completed will be 51,000 bales of cotton. The vast extent of the seven huge sections of shed covering the wharf, looming up from the river, where they front on a depth of thirty feet, is an impressive demonstration of the magnitude of the enterprise. The warehouse sheds are to extend over 450 feet from the river, and the cotton crop of South Carolina and adjoining States will here be protected by 33 hydrants with hose and nozzle attachment, capable of throwing enormous streams of water, under 70 pounds’ pressure, all over the warehouses and guarding it from fire. One magnificent new model press has already been installed and preparations have been completed for installing another. . . . Charleston has long needed to have facilities for handling and protecting the cotton crops of the South at her port, and those at Oakdene will be comparable to any in the country.17

The second major new industrial investment in North Charleston was the factory complex and associated mill villages of the General Asbestos and Rubber Company (GARCO). GARCO began constructing its first factory in North Charleston in 1915, building a large two story brick structure for fabricating asbestos products, primarily for automobile brakes. The mill site also included two large warehouse buildings
constructed in 1915. In June 1915 Rhett and his partners reported in the *News and Courier* that "Most of the machinery for the new factory... has arrived and is being..."
rapidly installed. Operations are expected to begin during the first week of July. Orders are so heavy that both day and night work will be necessary."\textsuperscript{18}

By 1916 GARCO launched an ambitious expansion, as reported in the \textit{News and Courier}: "At this time... the company is constructing two buildings which are said to be models of their class. One is nearing completion and for the other the steel framework has been raised. Each of these buildings are 100 by 200 feet. They are built of steel frames with metal-asbestos sides and roofing."\textsuperscript{19} In describing the elaborate construction of the mill, the newspaper noted that "The flooring is worthy of special attention. It is on a six-inch concrete base covered by one inch of tar gravel, this covered again by three inches of pine flooring, which is covered in its turn by a one-inch subfloor, and over all there is a maple top flooring."\textsuperscript{20} The elaborate and expensive construction methods were designed to protect the owner's investment from the ravages of fire, creating a model industrial complex in the first New South Garden City.

Before residential lots were placed on the market, GARCO had already begun work on separate mill villages for white and African American workers. In 1915, the company was in the process of constructing seventeen "picturesque and artistic" cottages designed by an architect from Athens, Georgia.\textsuperscript{21} According to Rhett and his partners, "Great effort has been spent toward securing comfort, and appealing to the esthetic sense in connection with the textile plant."\textsuperscript{22} The houses for white workers, which were four and five room cottages, included most modern conveniences of the day, including "running water, electric lights, sewerage connections and up to date lavatory conveniences."\textsuperscript{23} Houses in the village for African American workers were smaller and did not include indoor plumbing, but the developers of North Charleston
still proclaimed that the village “typifies the modern segregation of races in North
Charleston. . . and has been built with the idea of supplying this class of help far better
living conditions than have ever been offered before in this section.”

The beginnings of North Charleston’s infrastructure, then, were well in place
when the sale of residential lots began in 1915. As the newspaper reported, “North
Charleston is a busy place these days. Sixty mules with half as many scrapers are
grading the avenues at a rapid rate, while another gang of about forty with wheel
barrows and axes are supplementing this work, so that probably the liveliest spot in the
neighborhood of this city at the present time is North Charleston.” A total of twelve
blocks of sidewalks had been completed along O’Hear Avenue, Montague Avenue, and
First and Second Streets, and the developers reported that “water mains have been
extended from Montague Avenue to the asbestos plant. . . and the sewerage system is
now rapidly being laid to the same point.”

Moreover, Rhett and his partners extended the park system of the new city to
include a lot fronting on the Cooper River which was owned by the North Charleston
Company but was not part of the Marquis plan. Dubbed “Riverside Park,” the
developers noted approvingly in the newspaper that the park was “a popular resort
during this hot weather. The dense foliage of its oak trees makes it always a cool and
pleasant spot, while the benches that have been erected around these oaks in various
parts of the grove afford a very convenient resting place.” The newspaper also noted
that “city water is extended to this grove, there being a faucet located almost in the
centre of it.”

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Infrastructure improvements were also underway in Charleston Farms, the 3,500-acre agricultural area intended to supply food and other products to the factory workers of North Charleston as well as the residents of the peninsular city. In an October 1913 report submitted by James O’Hear, Engineer in Charge, to Rhett, president of Charleston Farms Corporation, documented numerous ongoing road and drainage projects on the site. O’Hear reminded Rhett that “By resolution adopted at the regular meeting of the Board, the expenditure of a sum not to exceed $2,000 was authorized for the purpose of building a road through the Farms from Cosgroves (sic) Avenue along the line of Rhett Avenue, extended northward and eastward to Goose Creek.” O’Hear went on to report that “A working force of about 50 men was organized and a sufficient equipment of tools purchased” to extend the road from North Charleston to Goose Creek. The road extended two and one half miles from Cosgrove Avenue north and O’Hear noted, “has been built thirty feet wide, the entire surface of the road having been grubbed, all the stumps and roots removed and the road crowned and side ditched. One terra cotta 12 inch pipe culvert has been placed where the road crosses the ditch of Cosgrove Avenue, and two cypress culverts... have been placed to take care of adjacent drainage areas.”

“In addition,” O’Hear’s report noted, “to this main road 15,700 ft. of new road 16 to 20 ft. wide have (sic) been built, around the ruins of Yeamans Hall through the handsome grove of oaks and passing the springs for which this site is famous. . . .” O’Hear described these roads as “thoroughly grubbed, stumped, graded and crowned. . . . They constitute attractive driveways which exhibit to advantage the beauties of this historic locality and give convenient access to a large area of arable land.”
The improvements made to the Farms opened it up to a variety of agricultural opportunities. A portion of the land drained in Charleston Farms was for a dairy farm, and the improvements to the property opened "a very notable spring, the largest of a series of springs which have rendered this locality famous." With freshwater for the site assured, O'Hear added that the manager of the Farms, Mr. Garrison, "thinks that this drainage has rendered the Yeamans Hall section as healthy as the site where he resides."30

Early in the development process Rhett and his associates realized that the Yeamans Hall portion of the Charleston Farms site might be used for a more ambitious development than as a section of small farms raising vegetables and chickens for factory workers. As O'Hear reports, "The building of the roads... opened up the lands lying around Yeamans Hall and along Goose Creek, and the natural beauty of this section, the luxuriant and varied forest growth, the hilly formation, the handsome groves of oaks and famous springs so greatly impressed the Directors with the possibility of its development along artistic lines into a residential section, with golf links, a country club, and the possibility of a tourist hotel that it was decided to improve these roads."31 Clearly, this prime property, some of the richest and potentially productive land in Charleston Farms, was not to be given over to small farmers or to factory workers hoping to live on a small plot in the countryside.

The cost of improvements in North Charleston and Charleston Farms was considerable, and made recouping their investment of prime importance to Rhett and his partners. The North Charleston Corporation estimated that it spent $150,000 on improvements in the city of North Charleston to install roads, ditches, water and sewer
lines, sidewalks, electric lines, park facilities, and other infrastructure. In addition, the developers spent funds on the Farms. As O’Hear’s report stated, “to sum up... 5.7 miles of new roads were built and... 2 ½ miles of old roads were cleared and regraded for the sum of $2,560.82.” In addition to road work, O’Hear reported to Rhett that “The length of [drainage] canals dug in this section during a period of eighteen and a half days... has cost $676.29.”

“Consider a Home in North Charleston”

Thus the advertisement placed by Rhett and his associates to open the marketing of residential lots in North Charleston on April 8, 1915, could truthfully state that “For more than two years plans have been maturing to this end.” The advertisement boldly stated that “we have no hesitancy in saying ‘North Charleston is destined to be the most popular suburban residence section in all South Carolina.’”

The marketing campaign began with a dinner at the Commercial Club, which Rhett had founded in 1903, at which it was reported that “R. Goodwyn Rhett, president of the corporation which has undertaken the huge development, gave an outline of the meaning and purpose of the enterprise.” The marketing strategy, which in all likelihood was designed and directed by Durant, initially placed on the block 420 lots which were to be sold to Charleston residents “who desired to participate in the profits of this great enterprise... at bed-rock prices.” According to the News and Courier, initial interest in the project was high, and by the evening of April 8, 135 of the 430 lots had reportedly been sold. The city’s promoters hoped to generate heightened interest in the property by increasing lot prices by ten percent, hoping to spur reluctant investors by declaring that “Those who were not fortunate enough to purchase at initial prices...
should not hesitate to buy now, since the investment is sound at advanced prices."\textsuperscript{38} The lots were affordable and the terms of sale were favorable; prices ranged from $165 to $264 per lot and, as the advertisements prominently declared, were sold at "One-Third of Cash—Balance in 29 Payments—No Interest—No Taxes."\textsuperscript{39} Thus for around $5.00 cash payment, "any white person of modest means is privileged to share in the rich proceeds of this the greatest development project of the south."\textsuperscript{40}

The aggressive marketing campaign employed by Rhett and his associates was clearly intended to entice residents of the peninsular city to invest in the new city and relocate to Charleston's Neck. Throughout April and May of 1915, the developers placed almost daily advertisements in the News and Courier with two essential themes: (1) the advantages of suburban living and (2) the economic opportunities offered by investment in the new city. The advertisements rarely mentioned the goal of developing large industrial operations on property girdling the new city, nor do they tout the agricultural opportunities afforded by Charleston Farms. The initial campaign was clearly designed to attract a middle and upper class population to North Charleston, which can clearly be seen in the first four advertisements in the News and Courier.

The initial "Announcement" of the availability of property in North Charleston took the form of a nearly full page advertisement and incorporated a dramatic "bird's eye view" that took its perspective from north of Charleston looking south, emphasizing the congestion of the peninsular city and the spaciousness of the Neck (Figure 5.2, Figure 5.3). The advertisement also incorporated visual cues that would be employed throughout the campaign, in particular towering pine trees which support the image of the new city, with the expansive street pattern of the Marquis plan superimposed on the
tree covered landscape. The advertisement even incorporated the root system of the
pine trees, suggesting that an investor should sink roots into the soil of the new city.41

Figure 5.2
"Bird's Eye View" of North Charleston, 1915

The advertisement on the following day juxtaposed a bucolic vision of a large
two-story frame house within a sylvan setting (Figure 5.4). The text accompanying the
images announced that “All lots offered for sale have been advanced 10% in price.”
The advertisement sought to build excitement in the development by describing “a
meeting of Charleston’s most responsible Real Estate Brokers,” in which the developers
“laid before them our plans for this initial sale of a comparatively small portion of our
holdings.” The copy continues by describing purchases of large blocks of property by
farsighted developers, heightening the sense that the cautious individual was likely to
miss out on the opportunity of a lifetime, particularly since "there will be another advance of prices in the near future."
FOR SALE HAVE BEEN
ADVANCED 10% IN PRICE
Read the Reason for this Advance

As we stated in yesterday's announcement North Charleston has been developing for more than two years. The result culminated in a recent decision to place on the Charleston market some 430 acres of land for immediate sale, with the idea in mind of offering those of this city who desired to participate in the profits of this great enterprise an opportunity to do so on liberal terms.

On Wednesday, March 22, we held a meeting at Charleston's most responsible Real Estate Brokers and laid before them our plan for this initial sale of a comparatively small portion of our holdings. It was understood at this conference that the Brokers should sell 100 lots from this first allotment to Charleston people and when the number had been sold the price on all remaining lots of the 430 should be advanced 10 per cent.

Up to last night (February, April 8) at 6 P.M., there had been sold 175 lots from the 430. The prices are accordingly now advanced 10 per cent.

There will be another advance of price in the near future, which will be duly announced in three columns prior to the advance.

In addition to the 175 lots sold during the last week, we had previously sold to Thomas & Thomas 71 lots and to a Development Company 21 lots. Twelve houses have been built upon the lots last sold, and a number of additional houses are to be erected on these properties in the near future.

Those who were not fortunate enough to purchase at initial prices should not hesitate to buy now, since the investment is secured at advanced prices.

**TERMS**—ONE-THIRTYIETH CASH, balance in 20 equal installments. No Taxes. 5% Interest. Prices range from $102 upwards.

North Charleston Corporation,
PEOPLES OFFICE BUILDING
CHARLESTON
W. S. Wilber & Co., 12 Broad St. Lawrence Pleasants,
Mas E. C. Calhoun, 60 Broad St. H. H. Duryan,
Thomas & Thomas, 56 Public's Bldg. A. A. Knowles,
Lancry & Hatt, 42 Broad St. Fred T. Isreal.
John Marshall, 31 Broad St. T. T. Hyde & Sons,
K. P. S. Tindley, 60 Broad St. Seabrook & Silver.
T. B. Price, 63 Broad St. Joe C. Lomax.
SALESMEN—E. V. W. Beesley,
W. F. Broughton,
W. P. Benham,
A. Leith,
GEORGE A. SITTON, Sales Manager.

Figure 5.4
Advertisement for North Charleston, April 9, 1915

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The advertisement on the third day of the campaign incorporated an even more visually ambitious illustration in an ad explaining “Why North Charleston” (Figure 5.5). The illustration is dominated by two suburban homes surrounded by spacious lawns, with a large touring car and a horse and buggy passing before them on a paved city street, which included sidewalks and curving walkways leading up to the grand houses. The advertisement also incorporates numerous tall trees in its layout, framing the text. The text is intended to answer questions concerning the intentions of Rhett and his partners with respect to the future of the City of Charleston and its relationship with the sprawling new city on the Neck. The developers stated unequivocally that “The reason for North Charleston is far broader and deeper than that of selling lots for immediate profit to the projectors. . . .” The copy reminds potential investors that “To the most casual observer of events, it must be evident that Charleston is not only destined to be a great metropolis, but that the growth to this end is already well upon us.” The advertisement continued, reminding readers that “All successful suburban developments in other cities have been made on the nearest high ground. The first high ground north of Charleston begins at the Navy Yard and stretches northward. There is where suburban development must take place. There is where it HAS taken place. There is where the over-crowded population of Charleston must look for relief by life in the open.” The text of the advertisement then explicitly drew together the two themes of the campaign, stating that “We doubt if there be a man or woman in Charleston who does not realize that suburban property is good from an investment standpoint and from the standpoint of actually living where there are better living conditions.”

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Figure 5.5
Advertisement for North Charleston, April 10, 1915

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The core of the text, however, is intended to lay out the relationship, both spatial and economic, between Charleston and the new city on the Neck. To this end, the advertisement informed readers of the improvements “already consummated and in progress, including Electric Railway to Charleston, Steam Railway to Charleston, Beautiful Roads, Streets and Drives, Electric Light, City Water, Sewer and Perfect Drainage. . . .” Rhett and his associates, however, felt it necessary to go further in assuaging the fears of Charlestonians, assuring them that “We do not anticipate moving Charleston to North Charleston, but we do purpose (sic) to build North Charleston into an ideal Industrial and Residential Section of Charleston.”

The North Charleston Company at this point in the campaign offered purchasers a “guarantee” on their investment. Reminding readers “That those who become interested in property in North Charleston will profit by their investment,” the developers informed potential investors that “we are now selling lots under an ABSOLUTE GUARANTEE of the return of the full purchase price if the buyer wants it at the end of 30 months.” The guarantee was clearly intended to excite interest in the development and to draw in the wavering Charleston investor with the sense that there was no risk in purchasing a lot in the new city.

The final advertisement in the initial series asked readers to “Consider a Home in North Charleston” (Figure 5.6). Visually, the advertisement incorporated the same themes as previous ads, including large homes and well-manicured lawns, though the illustration also featured a smiling, successful and well-dressed couple sitting on a porch perusing a newspaper, obviously pleased with their new home in the first New South Garden City. The advertisement included a visual representation of North
Figure 5.6
Advertisement for North Charleston, April 12, 1915

Charleston’s elevation in comparison to the peninsular city’s sea level site. The visuals were augmented by the text, which proclaimed "Consider the advantages of owning a
home that is a home out in the open, where you have room to live and grow mentally, morally, physically and financially.” The text also proclaimed that “From a healthful living standpoint the terraced woodlands of North Charleston are ideal.”

Again in this advertisement Rhett and his associates sought to connect North Charleston to Charleston spatially and economically. The text creatively explored this connection, informing potential investors that “In the modern conception of things DISTANCE is measured more by time than by feet or miles. In the ancient days of the stage coach to live more than a mile from your place of business was almost impossible. Today with electric cars and automobiles ten or even twenty miles is no bar to owning a home where one WANTS it. North Charleston . . . is practically within living distance of the business section of Charleston.” The advertisement also prominently placed a copy of the “investment guarantee” intended to assure purchasers of property that North Charleston was a no-risk investment.

These first four advertisements put forward the fundamental themes of North Charleston, that of a spacious residence in the countryside for prudent investors. These themes were reinforced over the balance of the opening marketing campaign, which lasted through June 1915. There is scarcely a mention of the industrial activities that the developers hoped to attract to the city, which would have undoubtedly detracted from the bucolic setting portrayed in the advertisements. Apparently, the hope was that Charleston’s middle and upper classes would follow the lead of the elites of other urban areas in America and flee the city for the suburbs, drawn to the pinelands of North Charleston by the sylvan setting and the easy access to downtown Charleston.
On April 20, 1915, the developers announced another ten percent increase in lot prices, owing to “the rapid sale of North Charleston Lots for investment purposes.” The increase, according to an advertisement placed in the newspaper, was also justified because of “the fact that our development organization is now on the ground to make promised improvements in addition to those already completed.” The advertisement also stated that the North Charleston Company was preparing to extend the geographic reach of the marketing campaign statewide, and noted that “The proportion of Lots offered to Charleston people before opening our State-wide campaign is now nearly exhausted, and our plans for starting out-of-town sales are nearly complete.” The developers were quick to claim that “These plans will bring many new residents and many new industries to North Charleston. Hence, it is obvious that purchases made at present prices and terms will prove lucrative.”

Other than advertisements in the local newspaper, the major marketing event in North Charleston accompanied the May 1 opening of the single most important infrastructure improvement, the electric streetcar line from North Charleston to downtown Charleston. According to the News and Courier, “Three hundred and fifty members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Ad Club and invited guests are expected to be in attendance... to mark the formal opening of the extension of the Consolidated Company’s street railway to North Charleston.” The opening drew a considerable crowd, as “Five double-truck cars carried... guests to the terminus of the extension. Every one proceeded immediately to Riverside Park, where a picnic dinner was served.” The extension was opened by the Mayor and Aldermen, the Consolidated Company having made it a custom to have these officials of the city open all new lines.
As if in a prefiguring, however, of the soon-to-fade glory of the electric streetcar system in Charleston and elsewhere, the newspaper noted that “Many persons made the trip in automobiles.”

The celebration for the opening of the streetcar line represented the largest gathering of potential investors on the grounds of the new city during the early stage of the marketing campaign. The North Charleston Company spared little expense in its efforts to woo purchasers. The newspaper reported that in the afternoon “visitors were shown over the grounds of North Charleston, automobiles being engaged for this purpose.” The report also documented the entertainment provided by the company, in which “The dinner was of the regular picnic variety, to which everyone was invited to ‘step up and help themselves.’ Punch, lemonade, sandwiches, fruits, pies, cakes, and other delicacies were on the menu. . . . The dinner was served in a large oak grove, an ideal spot for such outings. The oaks furnished plenty of shade, and besides being beautiful in themselves, are near the river.” Adding to the festivities was music played by Metz’s Military Band, a popular local dance band, which played “Numerous airs of the popular variety. . . . Their playing was one of the most enjoyable and enlivening features of the afternoon.”

The placement of the elite residential section of Pinewood Park onto the market was intended by the Corporation to accompany the May 1 streetcar opening but lots were not available in what Rhett and his associates called “Charleston’s master suburb” until May 7. Rhett and his partners were convinced that Pinewood Park was “destined to be the most beautiful residential section in the South, if not the United States.” In the flowing language of the New South urban progressives, the developers assured potential
investors that “These ‘estates’ range in size from 65 feet front by 150 feet deep to 200 feet square. They are located within or bordering on the beautiful Boulevard which circles the Central Park. . . . The boulevard surrounds the Central Park and is intersected by four beautiful avenues, the main one of which is Rhett Avenue, running 6 miles north and south 90 feet wide, parked in the centre with royal palms, planted on either side 50 feet apart.” The developers hastened to add that “This in a general way describes Pinewood Park, but it falls very short of the real picture as it is to-day and as it will be when finally developed.”

The North Charleston Corporation believed that the opening of the streetcar line to North Charleston would open the floodgates to property purchasers. In fact, the day after the formal opening of the line, the News and Courier reported that “It is confidently expected by officials of the company that a large number of visitors will take the trip over the new extension to-day. Preparations will be made for the handling of hundreds.” According to the developers, more than 1,300 people visited North Charleston the following day, and the News and Courier reported that “Twenty thousand fares were taken in by the street railway on the North Charleston extension during the month of May, an average of nearly 700 per day . . . ,” suggesting that the new city emerging on Charleston’s Neck generated considerable interest and excitement in the lowcountry. The challenge was to turn that interest into property sales.

“North Charleston Lots Selling Fast”

Rhett and his associates were offering lots, not residences, in the new city. At some point in their development plan the North Charleston Corporation made the decision not to go into the home building business. They had chartered the North
Charleston Development Company on November 15, 1913, with James O’Hear as
president and R. L. Montague as vice present “to construct houses, warehouses,
factories, and buildings of all kinds, whether for dwelling, mercantile, manufacturing or
other purposes, and to deal in the same thru purchase or sale. . . .”57 This company,
with a capital stock of $75,000, was charged with actually developing the property, but
clearly it was not intended to construct the thousands of houses that Rhett and his
partners envisioned for North Charleston.

Little home building had actually been accomplished when residential lots were
placed on the market in April of 1915. The development company had constructed
twelve substantial houses in 1914 on one block of an area which came to be called “Silk
Stocking Row” by the residents of GARCO mill village because of the perception that
this was the new city’s elite residential neighborhood. In addition to these twelve
houses, in May 1915 the developers touted the fact that “Seventeen beautiful,
comfortable homes are now in course of construction in North Charleston. Seven more
are under contract to be built immediately.”58 The developers proclaimed that “These,
added to the twelve already built, make North Charleston a neighborhood.”59 Despite
the hopeful advertising copy, however, North Charleston hardly resembled a
neighborhood in 1915, with a handful of houses in the vast 1,500 acre pine forest, which
in all likelihood presented an intimidating and somewhat forbidding aspect to the new
city.

Rhett and his associates early on recognized the difficulty in selling unimproved
property, noting in an advertisement early in the sales campaign designed to placate the
fears of wary investors that “To purchase undeveloped real estate that has every
possible guarantee of being quickly developed into a well built residence section is the
surest form of lucrative investment." 60 Furthermore, the developers clearly understood
this to be a problem, informing the News and Courier that "Under the plan of the selling
campaign only alternate lots are being sold. This is done in order to make sure that
home builders are interested as the corporation does not care to dispose of lots for
speculative purposes." 61 The developers were quick to add that it was "offering
inducements to persons who will agree to build homes in North Charleston." 62 A few
days later the local newspaper went even further, noting that "The [home] building
feature of the proposition offered by the corporation is said to have aroused much
interest. . . . [N]umerous inquiries as to the terms on which houses will be erected by the
corporation, to be paid for in monthly installments, have been received, and
arrangements have been made by some persons to have desirable buildings for
residences erected." 63

The North Charleston Development Company never engaged in a large scale
home building project, leaving to individual investors the design and construction of
their homes. Whether the reason for this involved lack of interest in home construction
by Rhett and his partners or, more likely, cash flow problems, the impact in terms of
residential property was twofold. First, the city developed much slower than it might
have otherwise. Fundamentally, there were few houses in North Charleston from which
to choose, and purchasers from Charleston, already living in a home, probably felt little
incentive to purchase property in an undeveloped tract of land and to build a new home
in the city. Second, by only constructing a relative handful of homes, and by not
establishing any design standard for the new city, the architectural aesthetic of the new
city was severely compromised. There was no unifying theme or appearance to the city, and early houses were scattered in an uncoordinated fashion over the sections opened to development. The order imposed on the landscape by the Marquis plan was largely undermined by the complete abandonment of a unified architectural style, giving the city an unplanned, almost haphazard appearance directly contradicted by the fact that nearly three years of intense planning had gone into the new city.

In 1915 the developers pronounced the spring sales campaign a success, claiming that "practically all" of the 420 lots placed on the market were "disposed of during the month of April [to buyers] within the city limits of Charleston at a round figure of $100,000." At the advertised terms of 1/30th of the lot price as a down payment, however, the Corporation probably realized only around $3,000. and with an investment in the new city of around $150,000, North Charleston was a long way from turning a profit. Moreover, from all appearances, the vast majority of the lots purchased in 1915 were for speculative rather than for residential purposes. as few houses were actually built on the lots until much later.

Nevertheless, progress in creating a city on the Neck continued. By the middle of 1915 North Charleston had a fairly well established infrastructure, with railways surrounding the city, a "handsome" passenger station, and access to Charleston via the electric streetcar. In terms of commercial activity, the News and Courier noted that "Mr. A. J. Riley has completed his neat little shop... [which] is the first retail establishment in the North Charleston business district to open for business." In addition, the newspaper reported that "The general merchandise establishment... is nearly completed and will be opened in the next week or two."
Corporation had constructed a school for the white residents of the city, and the *News and Courier* reported that "By next October it evidently will be necessary to enlarge the school by adding another teacher, and both rooms will probably be occupied. During the past year the scholars have numbered something over twenty. . . ." Moreover, by July electric power had been extended to the city, so that "persons living between Charleston and North Charleston and industries situated between the two points have available for their use electric current for domestic or commercial purposes." Road work in the new city had also continued, and the *News and Courier* reported in April that a new road, Rugheimer Avenue, would be open shortly as "a gang of one hundred men, with picks and shovels, will be grading the avenue as mapped out by the engineers."  

The initial sales campaign for North Charleston effectively ended in June 1915, with an advertisement proclaiming that "The improvements of North Charleston are improvements for Charleston." Clearly Rhett and his associates were responding to fears amongst Charlestonians that their investments in downtown Charleston might be rendered worthless by the huge city the developers were planning on the Neck. The developers felt the need to assure their neighbors that "No one could be so narrow as to not recognize that every dollar spent in the improvement of North Charleston will prove of great benefit to the City of Charleston. No one who has ever visited other cities can doubt the necessity of a beautiful residence district for Charleston. No one can doubt the fact that North Charleston when fully developed will be as attractive as any suburban district of any city." Bearing these facts in mind, Rhett and his partners felt
compelled to ask "how can one resist the temptation to own property in North Charleston which by every sound business reason must advance rapidly in value?"\textsuperscript{69}

Given this impeccable logic, property in North Charleston should have been scooped up by residents of the lowcountry eager to live amongst the pine trees and parks of the first New South Garden City. That was not to be the case, however, as Charleston's middle and upper class chose to remain in the peninsular city, and though some bought property in the new city, few actually made the move to the new city on the Neck. That none of the partners in the development of North Charleston chose to live in their new city, to take advantage of the environment they were creating, surely sounded a cautionary note which slowed property sales and left the actual development of the new city to pioneers willing to brave the empty spaces of the Neck. Unlike other cities, Charleston's historically based planter and merchant elite, so willing to visit resort locations such as Newport for the season, to travel to Europe for the Grand Tour, and even to spend an evening in Summerville, were simply unwilling to make the move to Charleston's hinterland.

"Out of the Noise Zone into the Ozone"

To analyze the sales activity of the North Charleston Corporation it is useful to take a longer period of time and utilize property transaction data from the Charleston County Register of Mesne Conveyance (RMC) office.\textsuperscript{70} Property sales in North Charleston between 1915 and 1920 occurred in three spatially distinct areas: the GARCO mill site and its villages, north of Montague Avenue: the streetcar suburb south of Montague and east of the Seaboard Airline Railway tracks, dubbed Silk Stocking Row; and the area adjacent to Rugheimer Avenue. In addition, scattered property sales

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occurred in the Noisette Tract, with one large block of property sold in 1915 for an exclusive residential area. To examine property sales records between 1915 and 1920, the data from the RMC office has been categorized into residential, commercial, and industrial property as well as into the four divisions incorporated into the Marquis plan which zoned the city into distinct land use and social class districts (Table 5.1).

The developers in 1915 opened the door to property purchasers, placing on the market residential lots in the area around O’Hear Avenue in Silk Stocking Row and Rugheimer Avenues (Figure 5.7). In that year, however, ownership of only a few of these lots changed hands. Of a total of 104 residential lots sold in that year, 87 of the lots were part of a single transaction, the sale of approximately 7.5 acres to F. Elliott Thomas on March 13, 1915, for a development called Edgewood.

Edgewood was located on a ridge in the Noisette Tract overlooking Noisette creek and fronting on O’Hear Avenue. Though the Noisette Tract was intended by Rhett and his associates to be working class housing, and was included in Division C, the property fronting along O’Hear Avenue was part of Division B, and thus carried more restrictions. This area, with a picturesque view of marshes associated with Noisette Creek and the Cooper River, was clearly intended to appeal aesthetically to an upper and middle class market eager to escape the city but with streetcar service just outside the door. James O’Hear resubdivided the tract in March 1915, increasing the lot size from that of the Marquis plan and reducing the total number of lots to 71. In June it was reported in the News and Courier that “Arrangements have just been made to extend the water main southward across Noisette Creek into Edgewood recently bought by Thomas and Thomas, and during the next thirty days the whole of that territory will
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<td>Division B</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7.42</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Division C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12.36</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>19.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.00</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>158</td>
<td>25.26</td>
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<td>7.96</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9.77</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>118.65</td>
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</table>

Source: Charleston County RMC.
be covered with water mains. Work on sewerage there will also begin at once [as well as] some sidewalk work.”72

Figure 5.7
Areas of Property Transactions in North Charleston, 1915-1920
Despite the effort at laying infrastructure to the Noisette Tract and Edgewood, for reasons that are unclear Edgewood was never developed. More successful was the other significant residential property purchase in 1915, the acquisition of ten lots by Thomas W. Carroll in Silk Stocking Row. In June, the News and Courier reported that Carroll “is now erecting seven houses on Third and Fourth streets between O’Hear Avenue and Cosgrove Avenue. These cottages are to be finished within sixty days.”73 In fact only five houses were built in 1915, with another added sometime after 1919.74 These two developments account for the bulk of the residential property sold in 1915, and three of the other lots sold in that year were sold to associates of North Charleston Corporation, including Robert L. Montague, for the purpose of legally recording the deed restrictions at the RMC office.

In terms of commercial and industrial property, there was even less activity. One lot was sold in the area designated for commercial activity in the Marquis plan, and one five-acre tract was sold to GARCO for its factory site. Thus, by the end of 1915, a total of 106 lots covering just over 15 acres of land were conveyed by the North Charleston Corporation. This stands in stark contrast to the developers claim that “some 500 lots have been sold.”75 Moreover, of the 106 properties sold, 87 lots, or more than eighty percent, were part of the conveyance for Edgewood, a development that never happened. More telling for the future of North Charleston, however, was the complete failure of Rhett and his associates to sell property in Pinewood Park, the elite neighborhood that was to stand at the core of the new city.

Property sales in 1916 were not much improved over 1915. Just over 50 acres was sold in the new city, but 97 percent of the property sold, over 49 acres, was
purchased by GARCO. Of the nearly nine acres of residential land sold in the new city, in 1916, eight acres was for GARCO's mill villages. In addition, GARCO purchased two large industrial tracts totaling 44 acres to add to the five acres purchased in 1915. None of the other factory sites situated along the rail lines in North Charleston were purchased. In terms of commercial lots, no tracts were sold by the North Charleston Corporation in 1916.

Nevertheless, in June 1916 the News and Courier reported on the considerable progress made in the new city. The newspaper reported that "The suburb is growing very rapidly, not only industrially, but in terms of population. In the period March 1 to date, the white population has increased from 365 to 450, an increase of 23 percent... Its negro population is 225, making the total 775 people." Rhett and his associates also reported in the News and Courier that "Public work has been pushed ahead by the North Charleston Corporation, especially along the lines of laying sewers, water mains and concrete sidewalks and making new roads. To-day North Charleston has 13.3 miles of drains, 12.3 miles of graded streets, 2.4 miles of surfaced streets, 13.750 feet of sewers, 22,046 feet of water mains, 9,200 feet of concrete sidewalk. Since March 1 3,300 feet of sewers, 8,495 feet of water mains and 3,500 feet of concrete sidewalk have been added."76

Roads were obviously important in building the new city, and absorbed a tremendous amount of money. As the News and Courier reported in 1916, "Another improvement which the company has just made is the laying of a 10-inch Georgia cement gravel roadway through its entire property. This roadway is 60 feet wide and... Its purpose is to provide a sufficiently strong roadway for very heavy traffic. In
addition, Filbin Avenue is being surfaced with cement gravel as far as its juncture with Cosgrove and Ashley avenues.” These road improvements, unlike the improvements made to Rugheimer in 1915, were designed to encourage industrial traffic and development in the city.

The Corporation was also involved in continuing its drainage improvements in the new city, installing creative new technologies to address the ongoing issue of tidal creeks and standing water. As the developers reported in the News and Courier. “Of special interest is a new automatic floodgate which has just been installed by the North Charleston Corporation to prevent the tide water from inundating a large piece of marsh land, which the corporation contemplates converting into a park area. In order to give this land an opportunity to become sweetened and be put into condition to support vegetation the floodgate, which is of a new type, has been constructed. It operates automatically, so that when the tide rises and threatens the marsh the gate drops into place, forming a barrier, whereas when the tide ebbs the gate automatically is released and rises.” The newspaper also reported that:

Another improvement which has just been completed is a pipe line, and in conjunction with it a trestle for foot passengers extending across Noisette Creek. This pipe line, which is 1,681 feet, runs from a water main on O’Hear avenue. across the creek, and to the plant of the Burton Lumber Company, its chief purpose being to give this company additional fire protection. The pipe line has been connected up with the fire hydrant system at the Burton plant, and is also supplying water for the boilers in the plant. The line has a novel appearance. It crosses Noisette Creek on a wooden bridge, the cast iron pipe lying in plain view along one side of the bridge. This bridge, which is of cypress, with the exposed posts encased in cement, affords a new and very convenient artery of communication between two sections which were formerly not within easy reach of each other.
In terms of home building, however, the North Charleston Corporation and its development operation, the North Charleston Development Company, were still largely inactive, leaving home construction to individual investors. Nevertheless, the News and Courier reported that “Mr. R. G. Rhett, president of the North Charleston Corporation, stated... that the demand for houses was very strong and that the very first minute a house was tenantable there was someone ready to occupy it.” In June 1916, Rhett and his associates noted in the News and Courier that “the next big residential development is likely to be made along Sumter avenue near O’Hear. Some building activity is now in progress on the street. . . . Arrangements have just been made for putting electric light wiring into this section and there are indications that other houses may follow. . . .”

In addition to these improvements, in January 1916 streetlights were put up in North Charleston. As the News and Courier reported, “Another notable event in the development of North Charleston occurred at dusk yesterday afternoon when for the first time street lights illuminated the town that is building. Persons going by electric car to North Charleston were sharply surprised at the difference made by the lights. Residents of the new town were delighted. . . . Fourteen nitrogen-filled lamps of 100-candle power burned dazzlingly for more than six hours, six of them are on O’Hear avenue, four on Cosgrove avenue, two on Lockhart avenue.” These lights were placed in the streetcar suburb of Silk Stocking Row and near the GARCO mill village for its white employees.

At the time of the street lighting, the News and Courier noted that “Mr. R. Goodwyn Rhett and others interested in the upbuilding of North Charleston, upon which a great amount of money has already been spent and upon which more is being
spent, are very much pleased at the completion of arrangements for lighting certain of the streets."81 In fact, considerable money had been spent on the new city, as was documented six months later, when the News and Courier provided a breakdown of the total investment to date in and around the new city: “Cost of North Charleston Corporation developments, $180,000; boarding house, $5,500; public school, $3,200; railway station, $10,000; store, $1,600; negro houses, $11,700; electric street railway, $35,000; electric light and power, $5,000; North Charleston Terminal Railroad, $15,000; A.C.L. Railroad, $50,000; Seaboard Air Line Railroad, $40,000; Oakdene Compress and Warehouse Company, (exclusive of new work,) $255,000; E. P. Burton Lumber, $365,000; General Asbestos and Rubber Company (exclusive of newest work,) $175,000; Texas Company, $250,000; Read Phosphate Company, $150,000. Total, $1,632,000.”82

There had been a tremendous amount of investment in the Neck, but the dramatic influx of new residential, commercial, and industrial activities had not materialized. In fact, most of the sales activity reported in the newspaper during 1915 represented speculative sales on the easy credit terms offered by Rhett and his partners. Though there are no dollar values associated with the property that changed hands, in all likelihood the North Charleston Corporation was starved for cash.

The reasons North Charleston did not boom in these crucial first years are complex, associated with the vicissitudes of the global economy as well as of the South. Another factor that cannot be discounted, however, is the absence of the visionary whose project was North Charleston. Rhett was elected president of the national Chamber of Commerce in February 1916, and had served as chairman of the executive

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committee of the Chamber in 1915, which was a position second only to the president. He traveled extensively for the organization while still serving as president of People's National Bank. Thus in a crucial stage of the development of the new city, its primary booster was occupied with establishing one of the key organizations of the Progressive Era, the national Chamber of Commerce while also managing the affairs of a growing financial institution. Undoubtedly this had a serious impact on the development of the new city, particularly in luring the new industrial enterprises to the Neck, which would have accelerated residential and commercial activity in the new city.

The years 1917 and 1918 were the most active years in terms of conveyance of individual properties. In fact, in these two years ownership of over half of the lots actually sold in the new city between 1915 and 1920 was legally transferred, though it should be noted that only thirty percent of the acreage transferred during the five year period occurred in those two years, largely owing to the substantial acreage purchased by GARCO in 1915 and 1916 (Table 5.2). The majority of the lots sold during these two years was situated in Silk Stocking Row and around Rugheimer Avenue, the avenue opened in 1915 in a gently undulating area of high ground south of Montague Avenue. The residential lots sold in these two areas, as well as the handful of lots sold in the Noisette Tract, were in all likelihood purchased on credit during the Spring 1915 sales campaign.

In 1917, GARCO purchased nearly 17 acres to add to its considerable holdings in the new city. Two thirds, or 11.2 acres, of the acreage purchased in that year by GARCO was for the mill village for the "colored race." One acre had been purchased in 1916, probably for the initial houses in the village. The village, located in
Table 5.2
North Charleston
GARCO Property Purchases, 1915-1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>44.63</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td>16.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Charleston County RMC.

marshlands associated with the Filbin Creek drainage basin, had been designed by Marquis as part of his original plan and then resurveyed for recording purposes by James O'Hear in March 1917. The village included a school site and a church site, the only site in the city so designated.83

The balance of the residential acreage sold in 1917 and 1918 was in Silk Stocking Row, the Rugheimer area, and in the Noisette Tract. The most popular residential area during this period, and indeed throughout the pioneer period between 1915 and 1920, was the streetcar suburb. This area, with its rolling hills and proximity to transportation to Charleston, held considerable appeal for the managerial and professional class working in the industrial operations along the Cooper River as well as the handful of doctors lawyers, ministers, merchants and other professionals who would eventually come to the new city. In terms of commercial acreage, a total of 32 lots representing a total of just over two acres was purchased in 1917 and 1918, representing a spurt of commercial interest in the new city. There was no industrial acreage sold during the period, which must have been a profound disappointment to Rhett and his partners.
The appeal of North Charleston in terms of property ownership was for the most part restricted to the middle class. Nearly sixty percent of the total acreage sold in 1917 and 1918 was sold in Division B, the middle class area created by Rhett and Marquis. Forty three percent of the acreage sold during the period was in Division C, but most of this acreage was for GARCO’s purchase of the African American mill village. In Division A, only one lot was sold, clearly showing a lack of interest by Charleston’s elite in the new city on the Neck.

The year 1917 also represents the end of the placement of any significant advertising for the new city. In May 1917, the North Charleston Corporation elected to name W.C Wilbur & Company “as sole agents for the sale and rental of our properties,” in all likelihood because the efforts of the Corporation were so mixed. The Wilbur Company placed the last large advertisement for North Charleston, under the curious banner headline “Out of the Noise Zone Into the Ozone.” The advertisement, in a last blast of New South progressive capitalist rhetoric, asks the question “Why lived huddled and crowded together in the city?” The text then strives to answer this question, informing potential investors that “You may as well open your eyes and realize that you are not living in Old Charleston, but a New Charleston, which is daily becoming more alive with the throb of growing business. Our now too limited residential area is being trespassed upon rapidly. Why not realize it and prepare for the inevitable?” In alarmist language that the promoters clearly hoped would motivate those still choosing to live in the peninsular city, the advertisement informs readers that “You sooner or later will be forced to give up your residential section to business. Where are you going? For a five-cent fare you can go to North Charleston. Thirty feet
above the city, amid the Pines; free and healthy. We have a site such as thousands of tourists from crowded cities journey many miles to attain. Provided with facilities permitting all the modern conveniences of city life—North Charleston offers an ideal site for the Rich Man or for the Man of Moderate Means, for the City Worker or the Man Employed at the Navy Yard."84

This advertisement represents one last effort by North Charleston's developers to draw together for the public the two ideals of the new city, that of a sound economic investment and a healthy suburban environment far from the squalor and decadence of the crowded city. After 1918 there was a steady, albeit far from spectacular, pace of property transactions in North Charleston. Over one hundred residential lots were sold in 1919 and 1920, representing a total of nearly 17 acres. The vast majority of these residential lots were in Division B, situated in Silk Stocking Row and in the Rugheimer area. Only four lots were sold in Pinewood Park, representing less than two acres of land, while 23 lots were sold in Division C, the Noisette Tract, totaling nearly three acres. In terms of commercial property sales, fifteen lots changed hands in 1919 and 1920. As in 1917 and 1918, however, no industrial property was sold.

Clearly the rush of residential, commercial, and industrial activities foreseen by Rhett and his partners in 1913 had not transpired. After five years of intense marketing, and after many thousands of dollars invested in infrastructure, only 119 acres of the 1,500 acre-city had been sold, around eight percent of the total property. Nearly sixty percent of this acreage was for residential purposes, while forty percent was for industrial uses, though the only industrial operation in the planned city was GARCO.

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Moreover, around eighty percent of the property sold was in the middle class Division B, while a scant two percent was in Division A, the elite Pinewood Park neighborhood.

The failure to attract Charleston's upper class to Pinewood Park in the latter part of the pioneer period must have represented a bitter disappointment to Rhett and his partners, seeking to build a New South Garden City centered on a social and economic elite longing to escape the crowded environs of the peninsular city. For the projects promoters, the distractions of outside events in all likelihood made marketing the new city difficult at best. Rhett was involved in the local fundraising effort during World War I, serving as the county chairman of the effort to sell Liberty Bonds. He was also involved in numerous activities related to the national Chamber of Commerce, including organizing an international trade conference in Atlantic City in 1919. In addition, in 1919 Rhett apparently had health problems that restricted some of his activities, which still included managing one of the largest banks in the state. Other partners also had outside conflicts, including Hyde, who had been elected to a four year term as mayor of Charleston in 1915 in a bitter campaign, and spent much of the years 1917 and 1918 coordinating local actions associated with World War I. Thus, the principals of the North Charleston Corporation were unable to fully engage in the building process necessary to draw the throngs of new residents to their city envisioned by Rhett and his associates.

"Where the Best of a Country Home and City Convenience are Blended"

What the North Charleston Corporation was offering to investors was an ideal suburban lifestyle. As Rhett and his associates urged potential residents. "Consider the many advantages of modernized suburban life, where all the best of both a country
home and city conveniences are blended.” The “blending” of country and city in the middle landscape of the borderlands required a certain measure of urban activities. Clearly the North Charleston Corporation had worked diligently to provide the infrastructure of the city, including electricity, water and sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, the electric streetcar line, a train station, parks, and other improvements considered part of the fabric of the modern city. However, it was up to the community pioneers, those first people to actually establish a household in the city, to create the social and economic fabric of life that would create the city on Charleston’s Neck.

A key aspect of life in any city is commercial activity. Though there were several areas of allowed commercial activity in the Marquis plan, the only area that actually developed into a commercial zone was along Montague Avenue. Retail activity developed slowly, and commercial opportunities were sorely lacking in the early years of settlement (Table 5.3, Figure 5.8). The developers claimed in April 1915 that “A contract was... let for the construction of a massive store, which was especially designed by Fred J. Orr of Athens, Georgia” which was to be “the most artistic store in the State.” In June 1915 the News and Courier reported on the completion of Mr. Riley’s shop, and that “The general merchandise establishment, to be operated by Mr. Jenkins... is nearly completed and will be opened in the next week or two.” This was in all likelihood the store referred to in news reports in May 1915 by Rhett and his partners, and though the North Charleston Mercantile Company was not a “massive” or “artistic” store, it did meet the needs of most of the residents of the new city.

Beyond the Mercantile and one small grocery store, however, there was little commercial activity in the city in the first years of settlement. Based on responses to
Table 5.3
North Charleston Commercial Activity, 1915-1925

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<th>Activity</th>
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<th>1921</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


the City Directory, however, by 1919 there was considerably more retail activity, led by Port City Bank, the first bank established in North Charleston, and the North Charleston Market, which included a meat market, hardware goods, and a lunch room in addition to grocery items. The North Charleston Mercantile was still in operation, and included men’s and women’s clothing as well as other dry goods on its shelves. In addition, the City Directory in 1919 lists Dixie House, a home building company chartered in 1917 by businessmen from New York and New Jersey. Capitalized at $100,000, Dixie House was established for the “manufacture and sale of portable and knock down houses and material necessary and incident thereto, wooden products of every kind and description and the construction of buildings and improvement to real estate.” The company
urged potential buyers in a February 1919 advertisement to "Let us build you a Bungalow Home. . . . We would like show you some of the Houses that we have built at North Charleston and vicinity." Few homes were actually built by the company.
however, and by February 1921 the Dixie House Company was taken over by Rhett and his partners.92

Nevertheless, between 1915 and 1920 there were the initial glimmerings of commercial activity in the new city, faint though they may have been. Groceries could be purchased, clothing could be found, and other sundry goods were available to the initial settlers of the city. Men and women, both black and white, working in the industrial operations along the Cooper River and, more typically, in the rapidly expanding GARCO operation, could have their basic needs met. And though the range of choice was in all likelihood very restricted, the vast retail opportunities of downtown Charleston were only a five cent streetcar ride away.

In addition to retail opportunities, a city must also offer a sense of community, and during this period the new city of North Charleston saw its first cultural activities, much of it centered around church and school. Though the plan for North Charleston did not include any space dedicated for religious purposes, the first residents of the city established a non denominational "Sunday School" on March 1, 1915, which organized various activities in the community. The Sunday School did not have a full time minister, instead inviting preachers from Charleston to come out to the new city and preach on Sunday afternoon. The Sunday School did not have a building and had to utilize various sites around the city for their services, including the passenger rail station off of Montague Avenue and after 1919 the newly completed North Charleston School.93 The Sunday School organized a Christmas program every year, with the first held on December 23, 1915, to which, the News and Courier reported, “Santa Claus will visit. . ."94 The festivities were held outside, on a lot at “O’Hear Avenue and
Second Street [and] . . . Every child and parent in North Charleston is cordially invited to attend." It is unclear how many of the first settlers of the new city attended, but the following year the festivities were moved indoors to a room “over the E. P. Burton Lumber Company’s store.”

Other activities of the Sunday School included an annual anniversary celebration and an annual picnic. The anniversary celebration in 1919 and 1920 featured an address by R. Goodwyn Rhett updating the residents on the progress of the North Charleston Corporation in building the new city in addition to the usual Sunday sermon. In addition, each year the Sunday School held a picnic at Riverside Park in May, for which, as the News and Courier reported, “The Sunday School will have on hand ice cream, peanuts and lemonade, and the parents are requested to bring cakes.” The newspaper added that “The afternoon will be spent in games. A baseball game is scheduled to take place. The boys of North Charleston are able to put up a good game, one that will be enjoyed. Everybody around North Charleston and Cherokee Place is invited to attend.”

Of course, not everyone in North Charleston was invited to attend the Sunday School. In June 1916, the News and Courier, reporting on progress in the new city, noted that “There is a white Sunday-school attendance of 80 . . .” The white workers of GARCO and their families living in the mill village were welcome, as were the professional elite living in Silk Stocking Row. In fact, the Sunday School probably represented one of the few times that the families of the two sections mixed and mingled. However, the African American population of the “negro village” was clearly not welcome at the Sunday School, and to ensure that the black community had a
spiritual space, in the plan for the village GARCO set aside a lot for a church. The church for this community, which would eventually become known as Dewey Hill, was originally intended to be nondenominational, but quickly became associated with the Baptist Church, with the congregation utilizing nearby Filbin Creek to baptize its flock. In addition, on the church grounds was the only cemetery within the planned city.

Another key component in creating a sense of community in North Charleston was the public school. The North Charleston Corporation had set aside land for schools throughout the city, and in October 1914 ownership of 1.46 acres of land off of O’Hear Avenue in the streetcar suburb was transferred to the local school district. The school included grades one through six, and in closing ceremonies for the school in June 1917, the principal reported to the community that “The year’s work... began September 25, on which date we enrolled forty-eight pupils. The enrollment each month has steadily increased until now we have eighty-seven pupils, divided into six grades. This shows an increase of 40 percent over the previous year.” The report added that “This has been the work of two teacher, but we hope that next year others will be appointed.” In terms of improvements to the school which would benefit the community, the teachers at the 1917 closing ceremonies noted that “The sum of $206 was raised for the playground equipment... This money was raised by popular subscription. The largest donation, $50, was given by the North Charleston Corporation.” The report by the principal noted that “The corporation also put up the apparatus on the school grounds.”

As with the church, the African American children of Dewey Hill were not welcome at the school in Silk Stocking Row. The village platted by O’Hear in March
1917 included a school site, and a one-room school house was established for the community, presumably with the assistance of GARCO. It is unclear which grades were offered at the school or how many children attended, but in all likelihood the school went from grades one through six.

In terms of social life not related to religious or school functions, the choices were limited. Riverside Park was a common location for many functions, unlike the Central Park, which was apparently was never used. Riverside Park was not improved to any great extent by the North Charleston Company, in all likelihood because the plan for the property—which was not part of the Marquis plan—was for industrial uses more in line with the Oakdene Compress and Warehouse Company and the Texas Oil Company operations. In fact, the 15.76-acre tract was sold in 1925 to Sinclair Refining Company, which established wharves and a refinery and distribution center on the site.

The sale of alcohol was prohibited in the new city, but a dance hall featuring non-alcohol beverages opened its doors in April 1917. Describing the grand opening of the "resort," the News and Courier reported that "a large number of people attended the formal opening of the Elite at North Charleston. Mr. Le Roy Holst, the affable manager, took pleasure in helping his guests to enjoy themselves. He had Metz's Military Band to provide tuneful selections for dancers, the musical program being continued until 11 o'clock. Flowers and candy souvenirs were distributed among the guests." The newspaper report continued, praising "the formal opening of the resort, which includes a soda water and ice cream parlor as well as a light lunch feature." The Elite, which was situated at the terminus of the streetcar line at Montague and

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O'Hear Avenues, also featured screened porches, essential for customers in the summer months. In addition, the owners of the "resort" constructed an outdoor pavilion, since "Just after the Elite was opened... its management saw that a large dancing pavilion would add greatly to the attractiveness of the resort and the work of building such a pavilion was at once undertaken." The managers of the Elite hoped to draw a crowd from Charleston, advertising the trip to the resort as "A delightful trolley ride through the country, passing near the Navy Yard and terminating at North Charleston. Take this trip and spend a delightful afternoon in the country. After enjoying the surrounding scenery, visit The Elite Company where refreshments may be obtained at reasonable prices. Screened porches—Music." Other advertisements emphasized the streetcar ride, calling it "A delightful ride through the country and in view of Navy Yard. Large double truck, open cars, all WHITE from 2:30 PM."

The resort scheduled "hops" on Monday and Thursday nights at the pavilion during the summer season, "Metz's Orchestra having been engaged by the manager... to furnish the music for the dancers." This was in addition to the continuing Sunday afternoon concerts at the resort. The Elite was open in Spring 1918, but at some time during that season the resort ceased operations. The facility reopened in 1920 as the Rainbow, but it was only open for one year.

Just as North Charleston developed the necessary community building aspects of city life, it also developed its darker side. Property crimes appear to have been rare, probably because of the tight knit community associated with both the white and the African American mill villages as well as the fact that few in the new city, even those on Silk Stocking Row, were tremendously affluent. There were, however, violent
crimes, one of the first, if not the very first, of which involved domestic violence. As the News and Courier reported in October 1918, “About 2:30 o’clock... a woman named Eloise Sumter was shot and killed at North Charleston, near the asbestos factory, by her husband, Lester Sumter, who escaped at once... The woman was shot five times.” The motivation for the homicide was not reported.

Six months later, another homicide raised the specter of racial violence. As reported in the News and Courier in March 1919, “A.M. Ludermilk, a white man about sixty-two years of age, was shot twice and killed yesterday at North Charleston by James Haynes, a negro. It is said that Mr. Ludermilk had an argument with the negro which ended up by the latter pulling a pistol and firing twice, both bullets taking affect, one in the head and the other in the breast.” The cause of the argument was not given, but the report noted that the shooting occurred near the GARCO mill, and that “Up to a late hour last night Haynes had not been apprehended, but it is expected with the clues at hand that it will only be a question of a short while before he is captured.” In all likelihood, the acquisition of “clues” by the sheriff and his deputies, who were responsible for investigating crimes in North Charleston, involved considerable physical force, as the newspaper noted that “Haynes’ father was arrested and sent to the hospital with a cut in his head.”

A crime in August 1920 further illustrates the presence of racial tension in the new city. The News and Courier reported on a fight aboard a streetcar in which four African American males attacked the conductor and motorman. As the conductor, W.J. Barrineau, reported,

his car left North Charleston at 6:30 o’clock Monday morning and had aboard four colored men. When the car reached the trestle between North Charleston
and the naval hospital the conductor proceeded to collect fares. Mr. Barrineau said that one of the men gave him five cents to pay for two fares, declaring that he had no more. Mr. Barrineau told him that he would have to put him off, and the man, resenting this, started to curse the conductor. Mr. Barrineau said that he drew a ‘black-jack’ he had with him and started to enforce his order, demanding that the man alight from the car. In the scuffle the man seized the conductor’s stick and started to use it. Motorman Leonard, hearing the scuffle, left the front of the car and started to the scene of activity, controller in hand. One of the men, Mr. Barrineau said, started at the motorman and closing in, seized the controller and started to beat the carman over the head. The conductor in the meantime had gotten the better of his opponent and started to help the motorman. He finally succeeded in reaching the motorman and in attempting to get at the passengers shoved all the men, including the motorman, off the car. The motorman regained his controller and the conductor seized a switch rod. The two started at the men but they fled. 115

The violence associated with this attack, and with the previous homicide, may have been isolated incidents or may have been emblematic of the intensifying racial segregation not only in the city of North Charleston but throughout the South.

There was also crime that did not involve murder or fisticuffs in the new city. In October 1919 the *News and Courier* reported on vandalism in the commercial district of Montague Avenue. Though relatively minor, the incident excited many rumors, and the newspaper reported that “Some person smashed a pane of glass at North Charleston and out of the incident grew exaggerated reports of a robbery in a bank or a postoffice. When questioned about the incident an officer of the bank declared that there was really nothing in the vagrant story and a postoffice official answered in the same vein.” The report noted that “Both [officials] were at a loss to understand how the incident had accumulated apparent importance,” noting that “The damaged window has been fully restored.” 116

Thus by 1920 the early foundations of the new city were in place. However, the dream of a new urban environment in which factory workers and farmers would live
and work side by side in a close knit community was essentially dead. The events that permanently altered the planned trajectory of development of the 5,000 acres that made up North Charleston and Charleston Farms were associated with the most cataclysmic event of the 1910s, World War I. Rhett’s vision of farmers working small tracts of land in Charleston Farms had been fundamentally modified by 1915 with the plan for a golf community, but the coming of World War I led to the total abandonment of the ideal of building a community that drew together the industrial and the agricultural sectors into a New South Garden City.

"We are Hoping for Greater Prosperity to Follow"

The event that Rhett and his associates believed would jumpstart the development of North Charleston was the coming of World War I. Though the Navy Yard represented a significant investment by the federal government, it never lived up to the expectations of Charleston’s boosters as an economic engine for the lowcountry economy. The Yard was subject to significant idle periods, such as in July 1912, in which the News and Courier reported that “The authorities of the Charleston Navy Yard are again face to face with the prospect of having an idle plant on their hands. Such work as has been in progress at the yard has been almost completed and within a few days, unless something new turns up, there will be nothing for the men at the station to do.” The newspaper report went on to note that “While nothing official has been given out for publication, it is nevertheless certain that there is cause for serious concern over the matter and it is known that efforts are being made to induce the navy department to provide some immediate work for the large force employed at the local government plant.” The newspaper hastened to add a sectional conflict to the report, stating that
"The present state of affairs seems well-nigh inexplicable to the average citizen. The United States has one of the largest navies in the world and its vessels are being repaired constantly at navy yards in the North. The amount of work which is done on them is enormous. Why the Charleston Navy Yard, one of the largest and best equipped that the Government possesses, should not be given some of the work which is done on the larger ships of the navy is a constant puzzle."  

By 1915, then, the Charleston Navy Yard was a relatively minor operation for the United States military, though it still represented a substantial economic resource for the South Carolina lowcountry. In 1915, employment and building activity at the Yard began picking up as the United States grappled with the dangers presented by the war raging in Europe. As the News and Courier noted in August 1915, "Within the last four years Charleston has seen the Navy Yard grow from a 550 size power plant to a 1,250-man power plant, with the efficiency and its intrinsic value to the community increasing in proportion. Now it is a great feeder for the city, pouring into commercial channels, through the wages it pays to this army of workers, nearly a million dollars every twelve months, and paying an unestimated sum out for material and supplies." The newspaper report also noted with anticipation that "The indications now are that the yard is on the verge of an era of growth that will make its former rapid expansion a matter of nothing, for improvements have been authorized by Congress and certain work is under way that will add incalculably to its facilities. With the addition of a few pieces of heavy machinery, according to officials of the institution, and with the completion of the building ways already authorized the Charleston Navy yard can build any auxiliary naval vessel of a maximum displacement of 4,000 tons, and can repair any naval vessel..."
whose size falls short of the biggest battleships.” Further augmenting capacity at the Yard was work on a new concrete pier that would provide 3,600 feet of berthing space. In addition to the work building and repairing ships, there was a “clothing factory” on the base, “the only shop of its kind maintained by the United States government.” The report went on to note that “A large number of the employees of this department are women. The total number of persons employed ranges from 175 to 200.”

Despite the growth at the base, however, the News and Courier in 1915 noted that “One of the problems of the Yard. . . is the matter of keeping all the employees of the pay roll supplied with work. From time to time it has been necessary to lay off numbers of employees, although efforts have always been made to avoid doing this.” Still, the newspaper understood the impact of the base on the local economy, reporting that “As an asset to the business life of Charleston the Navy Yard has increased two and one half fold in four years. It has employed one and a half times as many persons, and it is the source of two and one half times as much wealth to the community. The 1,250 employees of the Yard represent a population of at least 5,000 souls, citizens of Charleston, whose livelihood and daily sustenance is derived from the Government plant.” The newspaper felt compelled to remind its readers that “In these days of semi-depression, since the European war played havoc with the commercial channels of the world and when hard times talk has been rampant, many persons are inclined to give the Navy yard the lion’s share of the credit of preventing the City of Charleston suffering more than it has on account of the unsettled conditions.”

America’s entry into the war substantially added to the facility’s growth, as “the Navy Yard went on a war footing and became the headquarters of the Sixth Naval
District. Rear Admiral Frank E. Beatty and a staff that eventually numbered 335 officers and 7,000 enlisted men supervised the training of 25,000 recruits. The coming of war also led to a sharp increase in civilian employment at the base, which "jumped to 5,000, many of whom were employed building two docks and eighteen vessels. . ." Included among the vessels was the destroyer USS Tillman, which the News and Courier reported with considerable pride was "the first warship to be built in South Carolina since the War Between the States. . ." In addition, employment in the clothing factory at the Navy Yard increased markedly. In November 1916 employment at the factory doubled to around 500 workers, and by May 1917 the Navy proclaimed that "Six hundred additional women are needed at once for the naval clothing factory at the navy yard. which is running day and night, turning out uniforms for sailors. Foundations were laid yesterday for a new building which will double the factory's capacity and the need for women to operate the power-driven machines and perform other work is very great." In August 1917, the Navy decided that it needed to further expand its clothing factory, electing to employ the unused Immigrant Station, located on the Cooper River waterfront. The station had been built, at a cost of $70,000, in response to local pressure from Rhett and other immigration boosters in the wake of the voyage of the Wittekind. However, the station had apparently never been used to welcome immigrants to Charleston, and was sitting idle. The Navy's goal was lofty: "With the immigrant station in active use as an auxiliary clothing factory fully 10,000 garments a day will be the output for the Charleston plant. Several hundred additional female operators will be given employment in the annex." Interestingly, the approximately three hundred women
hired to work in this “annex” were African Americans from the lowcountry, representing in all probability the first skilled work opportunity given to the women of the black community. The clothing factory was a tremendous success, and as Moore writes, “Output grew from 90,000 garments in 1914 to 2.7 million in 1918. and by 1919 the factory was turning out 11,000 garments each day.” 126

In addition to the involvement in the lowcountry by the Navy, other military facilities were established in the Charleston area. In Spring 1917, as part of the preparations for America’s entry into the war, the War Department “designated [Charleston] as the headquarters of the Southeastern Department, taking rank with Governor’s Island, for years the headquarters for an enormous territory. Major Gen. Leonard Wood, then senior officer of the American army, was appointed commanding officer, being later succeeded by Major Gen. William P. Duvall.” 127 Charleston was extraordinarily excited by the prospect of Wood, a hero of the Spanish American War, leading the military effort in Charleston, and though he was only in command for a few weeks, Charleston remained in the forefront of America’s war effort.

The war did much to stimulate Charleston’s economy, as the annual military and civilian payroll associated with the Navy Yard surpassed $9 million by the end of 1918. 128 As R. Goodwyn Rhett, writing as County Chairman of the United War Work Campaign, noted in an open letter to Charlestonians asking for residents of the city to purchase Liberty bonds, “We already occupy a very large place in government activities. Millions have been spent here in the past year and we have enjoyed large prosperity already in consequence. We are hoping for more of these activities and for greater prosperity to follow from them.” 129
The effect, however, on the fabric of life in North Charleston was limited, with little appreciable gain in commercial, industrial, or residential activity. The vast majority of the military personnel were transients who lived in tents or barracks on the base, and most of the civilian workers commuted from Charleston on the streetcars of the Consolidated Company. In fact, the Consolidated Company had a difficult time meeting demand, despite having double tracked much of the line to the Navy Yard in 1916 at an expense of around $5,000. The cars from Charleston to the Navy Yard were overcrowded and poorly maintained, according to the riders. The inefficient operation prompted several rallies by civilian Yard workers disgusted with service on the suburban line, including one in which "between 1,500 and 1,600 employees of the Navy Yard and their friends paraded down King Street [Charleston's main shopping thoroughfare]. . . where they disbanded." The News and Courier, in reporting the rally, felt compelled to add that "There was an immense crowd on King Street to witness the parade. The crowd was a jolly one, but orderly."

The economic structure of North Charleston, then, was little changed by the war. However, in terms of social fabric, the influx of African American military personnel and workers at the Navy Yard must have created a problem for the white population of the new city. 1917, in all likelihood in response to some event or occurrence associated with the African American population and the military, the North Charleston Corporation placed an advertisement in the News and Courier stating that "Notice is hereby given that the lands lying within the limits of North Charleston, including the streets, avenues and parks, are private property, and only white people are invited or allowed thereon."
Race relations in North Charleston and throughout the lowcountry appear to have been problematic at best during the war years. There was evidence of cooperation between the white and black community, though Moore notes that “Involvement of area blacks in the war effort was . . . subtle, becoming apparent only as it became obvious that they, too, could help win the war. Males were, of course, subject to the draft, and those not in khaki found their labor much in demand at the Navy Yard and at various construction projects.” Fraser, however, reports on one of the more racially charged incidents in Charleston, which began in a pool hall in May 1919 when “a scuffle broke out between a black man and two sailors during which one sailor was wounded and the Afro-American killed. Rioters, hundreds of white sailors and civilians, poured down Market Street and onto Queen and King Streets, ransacking black-owned businesses, assaulting blacks on the streets and pulling them from trolley cars.” The riot took a day to quell and left three African Americans dead and seventeen injured.

The most profound impact of World War I on the future development of the first New South Garden City was not felt in North Charleston but in the agricultural development of Charleston Farms. In contrast to the development of North Charleston, which had proceeded, albeit slowly, after property sales began in 1915, there was little action in Charleston Farms. The only house in the tract was that of Garrison, the farm manager, and there were no significant efforts to develop the land agriculturally, despite the investments in roads and ditches made by Rhett and his partners.

Searching for alternatives to the original development plan, in September 1915 Durant, with the likely approval of the other partners, invited Frederick Law Olmsted to study the feasibility of creating a golf resort at the Yeamans Hall site in the Charleston
Farms tract. Durant asked for Olmsted’s “frank professional opinion upon the suitability of a tract of about one thousand acres near Charleston for development as a winter resort." Olmsted was squired around the site by Durant and O’Hear, and in a glowing and somewhat hyperbolic “preliminary report,” which was printed in full in the News and Courier, stated that “So far as I can determine, your tract has marked natural advantage in practically every respect, as compared with winter resorts like Pinehurst and Aiken, and except for those who prefer a still warmer winter climate and are willing for the sake of it to put up with a longer and very much more tedious journey and certain other drawbacks to be found in Florida and the West Indies, it has decided advantages over any existing or prospective winter resort of which I have any knowledge.” In further pursuit of the notion of a “winter resort” in Charleston Farms. Durant and O’Hear escorted golf course designer Donald Ross around the site, and though he did not provide a report that found its way into the local newspaper, it was reported in conjunction with the visit that “It has been known for some time that the owners of the tract intend to build a great tourist hotel on a bluff overlooking Goose creek and to have in connection with the hotel a golf course second to none in the whole country.”

Clearly, these plans for the best land in Charleston Farms did not comport with the ideal of a community of yeoman farmers. By the time America entered World War I, then, the dream of the first New South Garden City on Charleston’s Neck had largely been abandoned. The coming of the war would effectively end any further efforts to build a functioning agricultural sector to accompany the industrial city of North Charleston.
The final abandonment of the vision put forward by Rhett in 1913, in which “Anyone working in North Charleston may live upon his own farm,” is evident in the effort in 1917 by the developers to interest the U.S. Army in Charleston Farms for one of its sixteen training camps. Interestingly, on December 10, 1917, the landscape architect responsible for the physical design of North Charleston, William Bell Marquis, joined the Construction Division of the Army as part of the effort led by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to bring the best and brightest planners to Washington to plan camps, hospitals, and worker communities for the war effort. The P.J. Berckmans company, riven by a bitter family dispute between the three sons of P.J. Berckmans Sr. and his young widow, was on the verge of closing its doors. Indeed, in the 1920s the Fruitland Nursery property was sold to Bobby Jones and other investors and in the 1930s would become the site of Augusta National Golf Club, home of the Master’s Tournament.

Despite Marquis’ familiarity with the North Charleston site, he was hardly in a position to sway the location decision involving the highly sought after Army training camps. It was not for lack of trying, however, that a cantonment, as they were called, was not located in Charleston’s Neck. In January 1917, in a letter from then Mayor Hyde, the developers of North Charleston offered a site to the Army for a cantonment which was “located on the west bank of the Cooper river and rises to a height of fifty (50) feet above mean low water.” In an attempt to convince the government that the site was both high and dry, the letter noted that “This elevation together with the porous nature of the soil affords it ideal natural drainage.”

Rhett and his associates were offering the Charleston Farms tract to the government, with the exception of the proposed Yeamans Hall resort. The letter to the
government outlines the advantages of the site, including the streetcar line from Charleston to North Charleston, roadways, electric lines, and water and sewer lines. As to price of the land, the letter stated that “while we consider the value which has been placed upon the land by the owners very reasonable, we beg to say, in behalf of the City of Charleston, that the government may place its own valuation on the tract in question, as we are prepared to guarantee that the site will be furnished to the government free of all cost if the government is in a position to accept it as a gift.” Rhett and his partners, recognizing the huge economic potential of an army training camp just outside North Charleston, concluded in a flourish that “we wish to add, finally, that if there are any facilities or essential conveniences which the government would desire to have in connection with the site, we stand ready to guarantee that they will be furnished to the satisfaction of the government.”

The army chose not to locate one of the sixteen highly prized cantonments in Charleston Farms, in all likelihood due to the fact that Columbia had been awarded Camp Jackson, and placing two of these facilities in South Carolina would have created too much controversy. Nevertheless, Charleston Farms became an important site of military investment. The federal government requisitioned around 1,500 acres of the Charleston Farms site for an Army Port Terminal, which included a 2,840 foot dock, six warehouses, a classification yard, and an ordinance depot. The News and Courier opined at the time that the announcement of the facility “opened the eyes of most people in Charleston for the first time to the magnitude of the plans which are in the making for the use of this port by the Government for the relief of the congestion of the North. It has been known, of course, that investigations were in progress and that if
Charleston should be selected as a port for storage and embarkation vast quantities of material would be brought here for export and a great development of the port’s facilities would immediately be required.” The newspaper went on to tell its readers that the facilities would “carry an appropriation of between twenty-two million and thirty-two million dollars for the development of terminal facilities here, disclosing how vast is the program contemplated.”

Though the facilities did not quite measure up to the $23 million price tag envisioned by the News and Courier, the government did invest $16.5 million. The Port Terminal, as it was called, was intended to facilitate the movement of men and materiel to Europe, and also included an animal embarkation facility that could accommodate 10,000 horses and mules as “remounts” for the Army. The war ended, however, before large numbers of troops or animals embarked from the facility. though in 1919 the Port Terminal served as the debarkation site for 40,000 military personnel returning from Europe.

The end of hostilities on November 11, 1918 brought a rapid downsizing of the military forces in Charleston, and as swiftly as the wartime boom came, it disappeared. Employment at the Navy Yard declined dramatically, and by 1924 there were only 479 civilian employees at the facility. The training camp the Navy built in the Yard was shut down in 1919, and a 1,000-bed hospital the Navy constructed during the war was torn down in 1922. Employment at the clothing factory dwindled rapidly after the close of the war. As the News and Courier glumly reported in its July 4, 1919 edition, “Employees of the clothing factory at the Navy Yard were amazed yesterday to receive information that the Navy Department had decided to close the factory July 31,
throwing all the operatives out of employment. . . . At this time about 300 young
women and about fifty men are employed in the factory. . . . The order follows quite
closely on the heels of another which cut the working force in half, about 300 operatives
being affected, their motor sewing machines being ordered out of commission.” The
report went on to lament the loss of high paying wartime jobs, for which “It is reported
that the lowest wage in the naval clothing factory is about $15 a week, so that it will be
seen that Charleston will be losing more than $5,500 each week. . . .” The loss of
these high paying jobs had a seriously deleterious effect on the economy of the
lowcountry.

In addition, after the end of the war and the return of American troops from
Europe, the government no longer had a need for the just completed Port Terminal. The
federal government, rather than maintain the facilities, elected to turn the site over to the
City of Charleston for its use, though the city was not particularly well equipped to
maintain an operation ten miles north of the city. The site remained largely unused until
1937, when the city leased a sizeable portion of the waterfront property to the West
Virginia Pulp and Paper Company for its use. Ironically, one of the major issues in the
1919 mayoral campaign, in which Hyde ran against Rhett’s old nemesis William P.
Grace, was the fact that Rhett, Hyde, and the other developers had sold the land for the
Port Terminal to the federal government at an inflated price. Grace won the election,
effectively ending the political power of the progressive Bourbon capitalists who had
dominated Charleston politics since 1900 and who had been in the forefront of the
development of the first New South Garden City.146
The Pioneers

By 1920, five years after offering development sites in North Charleston for residential, commercial, and industrial activities, North Charleston had a population of around 700 residents. The News and Courier reported in 1916 that the population had reached 775 persons, though this estimate was in all likelihood a bit of boosterism.\textsuperscript{147} Utilizing the War Department quadrangle of North Charleston, surveyed in 1918 and published in 1919, as well as the 1920 manuscript data from the Fourteenth Census of the United States, a reasonably accurate portrait of the first settlers of North Charleston in terms of both spatial and social characteristics can be drawn.

Spatially, the population of North Charleston was clustered into three zones, referred to above as the streetcar suburb of Silk Stocking Row, GARCO’s White Village, and its African American village of Dewey Hill (Figure 5.9). Interestingly, the extensive property sales in the Rugheimer Tract resulted in no residential constructed in that tract. According to the War Department map, which shows dwelling units and other buildings, there were 21 houses completed in Silk Stocking Row. These were far and away the most substantial houses in North Charleston, with many of them large two-story houses with front porches overlooking well-manicured lawns. In the White Village, there were in 45 houses in 1916, according to the News and Courier, and in 1918, according to the War Department map, there were still only 45 houses in the village. In addition to these houses, there was one large boarding house in the village. In Dewey Hill, in contrast, there were 35 houses in 1916, but by 1918 there were 109 residential structures, clearly indicating an increase in the black population of the city.\textsuperscript{148}

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Thus North Charleston in 1918 was spatially segregated, with considerable geographic distance between the white and black population as well as between the population of Silk Stocking Row and the White Village. The only additional residential
structures in the new city were two isolated houses situated across from Park Circle, and the only commercial structures were three buildings along Montague Avenue. According to the War Department map, there were several large structures associated with the GARCO operation within the bounds of the Marquis plan as well as numerous structures for the industrial facilities along the Cooper River, including Oakdene Compress and Warehouse Company, Burton Lumber, the Texas Company, and Reid Fertilizer.\textsuperscript{149}

The social fabric of North Charleston during the initial settlement phase was also fundamentally divided. Data from the 1920 Census of Population reveal several fascinating differences between the population of Silk Stocking Row, the White Village, and Dewey Hill (Tables 5.4, 5.5, 5.6).\textsuperscript{150} According to the census, in 1920 there were 21 households in Silk Stocking Row, 76 households in the White Village, and 60 in Dewey Hill. This suggests that in 1920 there were numerous unoccupied houses in Dewey Hill, possibly relating to the slowdown in the postwar local economy which would have effected the black population at the factory first. The total population in all three areas also varied, with a population of 90 persons in the Row, 382 persons in the white village, and 227 persons in Dewey Hill, giving a total population of 699 persons. There were relatively few female headed households in North Charleston in 1920. None were reported in Silk Stocking Row, which is not surprising given its character as a middle class streetcar suburb, while seven percent and ten percent of the households in the White Village and Dewey Hill, respectively, were headed by females.
Table 5.4
North Charleston Household Characteristics, 1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silk Stocking Row</th>
<th>White Village</th>
<th>Dewey Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household Size</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Household</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Household Place of Birth</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Southern</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside the South</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<td>Read</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Female Headed Households</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Source: 1920 Manuscript Census.

In terms of the average household size the White Village had the largest average size with 5.0 persons per household. Even when household size is adjusted by removing the large boarding house, the White Village was the largest at 4.6 persons per household. Silk Stocking Row was close behind that number with an average household size of 4.3 persons. The household size in Dewey Hill was smaller, in all likelihood due to the fact that there were smaller houses built by GARCO in that community, three to four rooms versus four to five rooms in the White Village.¹⁵¹
Table 5.5
North Charleston Household Composition Characteristics, 1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silk Stocking Row</th>
<th>White Village</th>
<th>Dewey Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position in Household</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Family</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1920 Manuscript Census.

Table 5.6
North Charleston Household Age Characteristics, 1920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Silk Stocking Row</th>
<th>White Village</th>
<th>Dewey Hill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1920 Manuscript Census.

The average age of the head of the household was substantially higher in Silk Stocking Row than it was for the White Village or Dewey Hill, due in large measure to

the more middle class characteristics of the population in the Row. In addition, the

heads of households in the Row were much less likely to hail from South Carolina than
the heads in the White Village. The vast majority of the heads of household in Dewey Hill were from South Carolina. In terms of education, all but one of the household heads in the White Village were able to read and write, whereas in Dewey Hill just over half could read and exactly half reported that they could write. Nearly all of the household heads in Silk Stocking Row could both read and write.

The composition of the households in all three areas differed dramatically. In terms of gender differences, both Silk Stocking Row and the White Village were dominated by males, though in the Row the higher percentage of males is due in large measure to the significant percentage of "other family members," such as brothers and fathers, within the households. There were also several households headed by bachelors. In the White Village, on the other hand, the large difference in the number of males and females was due almost entirely to the presence of numerous male boarders working in the factory. In Dewey Hill, males and females were nearly balanced, with many fewer "other family members," probably because of the small size of the houses as well as the presence of both female and male boarders in the village.

The age structure of the households is also revealing. In Silk Stocking Row the population was much older, with fully 45 percent of the population 30 years of age and older. This stands in sharp contrast to the White Village, in which only 29 percent of the population is above 30 years of age, and Dewey Hill, where less than a quarter of the population is above 30 years of age. In all three communities, around forty percent of the population was younger than twenty years of age, but in the percent of population between 20 and 29 years of age there were considerable differences. Silk Stocking Row had a relatively small 13 percent of its population between 20 and 29 years of age.

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whereas 30 percent of the White Village and 38 percent of Dewey Hill were in that age range.

There are also several interesting patterns related to gender and age. The female population of North Charleston was essentially young, with nearly 50 percent of the females in both Silk Stocking Row and the White Village under the age of 20. In Dewey Hill, slightly fewer of the females, 45 percent, were under the age of 20. In terms of the female population between 20 and 29, however, the Row had relatively few women, 13 percent, in that range while in the White Village 23 percent of the females were in that age range and in Dewey Hill an even larger 37 percent of the females were between 20 and 29. The explanation for this pattern lies at least in part with the spouses in the Row, who tended to be older than in the White Village or Dewey Hill, as well as with the presence of female boarders in the GARCO mill villages who tended to be women between 20 and 29 years of age. The significant number of females between the ages of 30 and 39 in the Row, 25 percent, was due to the older family structure of that community.

For males, the population under 20 years of age was substantially less than that of females, probably reflective of an earlier move away from home to enter the work force, even for those growing up in Silk Stocking Row. The starkest contrast in terms of age for males, and one clearly derived from the employment structure of a textile mill, was the difference between the three areas in the population 20 to 29 years of age. In Silk Stocking Row, relatively few males, 12 percent, were between 20 and 29 years of age. In the White Village and Dewey Hill, in contrast, the percent of males in this age range was much higher, 35 percent and 38 percent, respectively. The large
percentage of males in this age group was due to the textile industry's need for young male workers in the physically exhausting work in the mill. For young men in Silk Stocking Row, however, looking for more professional, white collar employment, there would have been little in the way of opportunity to draw them to or hold them in the new city.

The occupational structure of the three areas is also revealing. In terms of professional and managerial work, most of the heads of household in Silk Stocking Row, 67 percent, were employed in that category. In contrast, only 20 percent of the heads of household in the White Village and none of the household heads in Dewey Hill were in the professional and managerial category. The vast majority, 64 percent, of the household heads in the White Village were employed in technical and skilled occupations in the mill, including carders, spinners, fixers, and weavers. In contrast, the vast majority of the heads of household in Dewey Hill were employed as laborers. Interestingly, not all of the heads of household in Dewey Hill worked for GARCO, which apparently was not a requirement for residence in the village. Several were employed at the other industries in the area, including the sawmills, cotton compress, oil facilities, and retail establishments. Most of these jobs were as laborer for these operations.

For women, there were a handful of work opportunities in North Charleston. None of the spouses in Silk Stocking Row were employed, but in the White Village a few wives worked in skilled occupations, such as carder, spinner, or fixer. In Dewey Hill, however, there was only one working wife, and she was employed as a laborer at the mill. In terms of the few female headed households, in the White Village most of
these women worked as weavers while one ran the boarding house in the village. In Dewey Hill, occupations of the female heads of household ranged from nurse at the asbestos mill to laborers. Several of the female heads of household in both GARCO villages did not work, and may have been on some sort of payment schedule related to the death of their spouse while working at the mill.

Boarders were also an important part of the occupational structure of both the White Village and Dewey Hill, though not of Silk Stocking Row. Male boarders in the White Village represented a significant portion of the technical work force associated with the mill, including spinners, weavers, and carders, in addition to an engineer and several workers associated with maintaining the intricate machines in the mill. There was only one female boarder in the White Village, and she worked as a housekeeper for a family. In Dewey Hill, not surprisingly the male boarders worked as laborers, with a few working in other occupations in the mill as well as other industrial occupations. Female boarders in Dewey Hill worked in a variety of occupations, including school teacher, nurse, and technical work in the mill. There was also a group of three female boarders who helped a family take in laundry.

North Charleston in 1920, then, was spatially as well as socially divided, with clear distinctions by race and class. The middle class “elite” of Silk Stocking Row had some contact with the residents of the White Village, related to the educational system as well as the Sunday School. However, the residents of the Row and the White Village had little if any significant contact—other than in the work place—with the African American population of Dewey Hill. There was also a clear shift in occupational status,
with professionals dominating Silk Stocking Row, technical workers predominate in the White Village, and laborers the dominate occupational category in Dewey Hill.

Thus North Charleston at the close of the "pioneer phase" in 1920, had a small but well established population living in a new city with a fairly well developed infrastructure, including roads, a streetcar line, electric lights, and water and sewer lines. In addition, the new city had a functioning school and community structure, including recreation opportunities as well as a spiritual foundation, and limited but still significant employment opportunities. However, vast acreage in the new city lay undeveloped and unoccupied, which must have led to a profound sense of isolation for the early settlers. Moreover, Rhett's vision of a New South Garden City, which bound together the agricultural and industrial spheres of the South's economy and society, was dead. Still, the prospects for new industry and commercial and residential growth in the new city emerging on Charleston's Neck seemed bright.

After 1920, Charleston's economy began to slide into decline. The county's population, which had grown 22 percent between 1910 and 1920, would actually decline between 1920 and 1930 by seven percent. Property sales in North Charleston ground to a virtual halt, with only 37 residential lots sold between 1921 and 1925 (Table 5.7). Only 13 lots were sold in the new city's commercial districts, and only two industrial lots were sold. The revenue stream to the North Charleston Corporation through property sales had dried up. The only significant new industrial development in the area was the storage and refinery operation of Sinclair Oil Company.¹⁵²

There was a burst of commercial activity in the city in 1921, which included the first barbershop, hotel, druggist, and shoemaker as well as several new grocery stores.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1922</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>1924</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Lots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Lots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division C</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division D</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Charleston County RMC.
For general merchandise, North Charleston had an adequate selection of stores. In 1919 the new city had one General Merchandise establishment, the North Charleston Mercantile Company. By 1921, however, the city boasted four additional general stores: Felton Mercantile Company, North Charleston General Store, North Charleston Market, and Port City Mercantile Company. These stores provided the backbone of the commercial life of the city, and the smaller shops, which appeared to come and go on an annual basis, provided extra services when economic conditions allowed. After 1922, however, there was little new commercial activity added to the city, which meant that North Charleston's commercial district had, relatively speaking, limited choices and vitality.153

In terms of social life after 1920, the major addition to the community was the founding of church congregations for the white residents of the city. The Presbyterian Church was the first denomination to acquire property in the new city, purchasing several lots in 1917 in Silk Stocking Row. In 1921 there was a Presbyterian minister living in the city, but the church apparently did not sufficiently establish itself to build a sanctuary and by 1924 the Presbyterian Church was no longer active in the city. The first churches built in North Charleston for white residents were of the Baptist and Episcopal denominations. The Baptist Church completed a sanctuary in 1923 in Silk Stocking Row on property acquired in January 1920. Likewise, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd was opened in 1923 in Pinewood Park on property purchased in November 1922. A Methodist congregation was also established in 1923, but in its early years met in a building adjacent to the Baptist Church. The Baptist Church had a minister living in North Charleston, while the Methodist Church apparently relied on a
circuit minister until the 1930s, when the congregation had grown sufficiently to support a minister living in the community.\textsuperscript{154}

In 1925, a land survey of the entire North Charleston property showing all of the structures in the city was completed, providing a snapshot of the new city at the close of this first stage of development. The North Charleston Corporation had been working to build a city for well over a decade, and the results must have been a disappointment to Rhett and his partners. The construction of new residences between 1920 and 1925 was slow at best, with a total of 68 non-mill residential structures in the city at the close of the period. Fifty-six of those houses were in Silk Stocking Row, with only nine houses situated in Pinewood Park. The vision of an elite residential suburban district on large lots facing a bucolic central park had clearly not materialized. Three additional houses were located in Edgewood, the only structures in the Noisette Tract. Dewey Hill, which had 109 houses in 1918, had the same number in 1925, the only addition to the community the one room school house built by GARCO. The major area of growth in the new city was in the White Village, which jumped from 45 houses and a large boarding house in 1918 to 129 houses and a boarding house in 1925, a nearly 200 percent increase. The most significant addition to the built environment were new schools, including a large high school which had been built on top of Marquis’ plaza site and a Grade School in Pinewood Park. In terms of commercial buildings, the commercial district along Montague Avenue by 1925 had 23 structures of varying sizes scattered along its three blocks. There had been little change, however, in the industrial landscape. The only significant industrial activity within the bounds of the new city
remained GARCO, though a few warehouse structures had sprung up along the rail lines passing through the city.155

By 1925, then, the dream of a New South Garden City was over. The Charleston Farms tract lay essentially empty, with the exception of the sprawling and neglected Port Terminal facility. The industries envisioned by Rhett and his partners stretching out like ribbons along the rail lines passing through the new city had not come. The exclusive suburban landscape of Pinewood Park, with large home nestled comfortably on sprawling lots of half an acre or more, had not developed. What had emerged was a middle class streetcar suburb, with moderate homes on moderate sized lots, as well as a pair of mill villages, one white and one black, for the industrial workforce associated with the single major employer in the city. There was a functioning commercial area, and schools and churches were available to the population. What this meant, however, was that a vast amount of undeveloped property was still in the hands of the North Charleston Corporation, land for which there was little demand but for which there could still be an economic use. North Charleston could be put up as collateral to bring cash to the cash starved investors in the new city.

"Castles in Air"

The second phase of the development of North Charleston involves the growing stagnation of the South Carolina economy after 1920, which for North Charleston resulted in the mortgaging of the property owned by the city’s developers to outside interests and the eventual transfer of ownership of the property to those interests. In fact, the control of almost all of the major developments in Charleston’s Neck passed from local control between 1925 and 1940. Though there was a measure of economic
activity in the new city, the economic vitality bringing wealth and prestige to the lowcountry envisioned by Rhett in 1912 was nowhere to be found in the years following 1925.

South Carolina's agricultural economy, particularly in terms of its cotton crop, boomed during the heady years of World War I. As Edgar notes, the cotton market in the 1910s experienced a roller coaster ride: "In July 1914 cotton stood at 13¢ a pound and a record crop was whitening in the fields. Then came war in Europe. Export markets disappeared and prices plummeted." As the war in Europe dragged on, however, the value of cotton began to turn, and when the United States entered the war, prices soared. As Edgar notes, "Every one was making money: landowners, bankers, merchants, tenants, and sharecroppers. Cotton acreage expanded. For the first time in memory, tenants and sharecroppers had real disposable income and 'engaged in a perfect orgy of spending' on machinery, barns, housing and consumer products. The end of the war did not mean the end of high cotton prices. In the spring of 1920 cotton reached 40¢ per pound." The boom in cotton, to which South Carolina's economy was so closely tied, did not last. Edgar writes: "For the first six months of 1921 cotton prices were near or above 40¢ per pound; then they began to drop. By December cotton was 13 ½¢ a pound." The magnitude of the economic collapse was enormous: "The State commissioner of agriculture estimated that farmers spent $250 million planting a crop that would bring them only $140 million." In addition to the collapse of the cotton market, that other South Carolina agricultural staple, tobacco, also suffered in the early 1920s, as "Bright leaf tobacco fell from 40¢ a pound in 1919 to 21.1¢ in 1920."
Edgar summarizes the rapidly declining fortunes of the South Carolina agricultural economy succinctly, dryly noting that “Sagging farm prices marked the beginning of a rural depression that effected the entire state.” ¹⁶¹

Edgar attributes the collapse of South Carolina’s agricultural economy in the 1920s to overproduction and the loss of overseas markets. Other factors also played a role in exacerbating this situation, as “a series of droughts and boll weevils hammered the cotton crop. . . . It is estimated that in some years the boll weevil destroyed one-half the crop. At about the same time the boll weevil struck, so did drought.” Productivity in South Carolina’s rural sector had come to a screeching halt, such that “In 1922, South Carolina farmers produced fewer than one-third the number of bales. . . produced just two years earlier.” ¹⁶²

“The Company Desires to Raise Money”

The effects on North Charleston, as well as the companies created to develop the new city, were clear. Property sales in North Charleston declined precipitously between 1920 and 1925, which had a deleterious effect on the bottom lines of the North Charleston Corporation and the North Charleston Development Company. Without property sales, there was no income to the companies for further investment in the infrastructure needed to develop the city. And without new investment in infrastructure, property owners could not be convinced to move to the new city on Charleston’s Neck.

In fact, between 1920 and 1925, only 18.6 acres of land were sold in the new city, and of that acreage, nearly 40 percent, or 7.23 acres, was sold to the Charleston County school board or to religious organizations. It is highly unlikely that the developers sold these large tracts for schools or churches at a profit. Just over six acres

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of property was sold for residential purposes, with the vast majority of that property in the middle class Division B. In fact, only two lots were sold to private individuals in Division A, the prestigious Pinewood Park. No large new industrial operations invested in the city, though the Sinclair Oil Company purchased 18.18 acres on the Cooper River outside the fabric of the new city for a refining and storage operation. Less than an acre of commercial property was sold in the period.\textsuperscript{163}

Thus, by 1925, with South Carolina's economy in a depression and the developers of North Charleston starved for cash, Rhett and his partners embarked on a series of financial moves to try to bring an infusion of money into the lowcountry, using North Charleston as collateral. This effort involved the creation of a new property holding company and the selling of bonds totaling over half a million dollars. The denouement of this financial scheme authored by Rhett and his associates brought bankruptcy, scandal, and suicide, and left the future of the first New South Garden City in the hands of Northern investors.

The land survey completed by James O'Hear in February 1925 was the first tangible evidence of the financial undercurrents involving the companies developing North Charleston. From 1920 to 1925, there was little in the way of new investment in the city, either by private individuals or by the entities developing the city. Progress reports on the development disappeared from the local media and no new streets or other infrastructure improvements occurred. Development of North Charleston had, for all intents and purpose, halted.

The North Charleston Corporation was the primary company established to manage the development of the new city. Chartered in 1912 and capitalized at
$1,000,000 divided into 10,000 shares of $100 each, at the time of its founding only 20 percent of the capital stock had been “subscribed” and paid to the company’s treasurer, R. Goodwyn Rhett. The company, then, probably had around $200,000 available to it at the time of its inception. It is conceivable that additional stock was sold in the ensuing years, but in all probability this represented the funds available to the company. Likewise, the North Charleston Development Company, which had been chartered in 1913 and capitalized at $75,000, attested that it had sold 20 percent of its stock at the time of its chartering. The Development Company, which was responsible for actually building houses in the new city, must have eventually sold all of its shares of stock, because in 1921 in a meeting of the company’s directors—Rhett, Montague, and O’Hear—the capital stock was increased to $100,000.164

How much of this stock was actually sold is unclear, but little in the way of new investment by the company in North Charleston was undertaken. Seven new houses were constructed by the North Charleston Development Company in Pinewood Park, providing company to the lone house that the company constructed in the area prior to 1918.165 The major infrastructure improvement that may have utilized this money was paving and installation of sidewalks on Marquis Road, leading to the new elementary school that opened in 1922.

The increase of the North Charleston Development Company’s capital stock in 1921 was but the opening move in a complicated sequence of financial transactions. By 1925, with the companies involved in development projects on the Charleston Neck starved for cash, much larger financial developments ensued. These developments intimately involved Rhett’s Peoples State Bank, one of the largest financial institutions
in South Carolina. These transactions in all likelihood helped bring about the bank’s eventual collapse.

The conduit through which Rhett and his associates channeled money to the development of North Charleston was Peoples State Bank of Charleston, also known as Peoples National Bank and Peoples-First National Bank. Rhett became president of the bank in 1899 after gaining a controlling interest in the institution.\textsuperscript{166} By 1919, Peoples National Bank boasted in an advertisement that it was “Charleston’s most modern bank. Doing business on a sound financial basis.”\textsuperscript{167} The bank’s reported assets included “Capital $500,000.00. Surplus and Undivided Profits $323,000.00. Total resources over $7,000,000.00.”\textsuperscript{168} One of Rhett’s partners in the North Charleston project, Robert L. Montague, was deeply involved in the bank as well, sitting on its board of directors and playing an active role in investment decisions. As president of the Montague Corporation, he placed his wealth in the bank, which in turn financed lowcountry projects, including the development of North Charleston.

After the increase of stock of the North Charleston Development Corporation, the developers of North Charleston took their first steps in 1925 to use the North Charleston property as collateral. In March 1925, the North Charleston Development Company took out a mortgage in the amount of $55,000 at six percent interest, with the holder of the securities the North Charleston Corporation. The notes in the amount of $5,000 each were “maturing at successive intervals of six months, the first of said notes maturing September 15, 1925.”\textsuperscript{169} In addition, the Yeaman’s Hall Company, charged with developing the posh winter resort envisioned more than a decade earlier by Rhett and his partners, in May mortgaged a portion of its holdings to the North Charleston
Corporation for $34,000, again paying interest of six percent. Interest payments on the notes of $1,000 each were to be made semi-annually and the notes were to mature on April 1, 1930. The source of the money provided to the North Charleston Development Company and the Yeamans Hall Company by the North Charleston Corporation, with Rhett and his associates sitting on the boards of all the companies, must have been Rhett’s Peoples State Bank. The disposition of these funds is unclear, but it was undoubtedly not used in developing the new city of North Charleston, where investment had virtually ground to a halt.170

The ensuing financial moves were much broader in scope and darker in their implications. In February 1925, O’Hear completed his “General Map of Resubdivision of North Charleston,” which updated the 1914 Marquis plan to reflect lot resubdivisions that had been accomplished, necessitated by property purchases by GARCO, the school board, and others. With this “General Map” in hand the developers chartered a new company, the North Charleston Company, on June 15, 1925. Indicative of the complex financial maneuvers in which Rhett and his partners were engaged, in a letter of transmittal of the information for the new charter to the South Carolina Secretary of State dated June 13, 1925, Henry Buist noted that “it is of great importance to this Company that its charter should bear the date not later than June 15, 1925 as all of its financial arrangements have been made based on this. Under the circumstances we will appreciate it very much of you will have the charter dated as of June 15, 1925.”171 Given the seriousness of the “financial arrangements” that were underway, Buist felt compelled to add “We will appreciate it if you will telegraph us collect Monday
morning that June 15th is the date of the charter." 172 The Secretary of State was able to comply and the company’s charter bears the date June 15, 1925.

The North Charleston Company was chartered with $300,000 in capital stock, divided into 3,000 shares of $100 each. There were several familiar names as directors, including Rhett, Montague, Buist, Durant, and O’Hear. Robert L. Montague was elected president, R. Goodwyn Rhett was selected as Vice President, and James O’Hear was named secretary and treasurer of the new company. According to the company’s charter, it had a broadly stated purpose, including:

- buy, lease, hold and sell real estate, closes in action, and personal property of every kind, nature and description; to acquire, own, hold, control, and dispose of the capital stock, Bonds or Securities of other corporations; to act as manager for conducting the business of any other corporation; to conduct a general mercantile business; to purchase, construct, own and operate water works or water mains, either or both; to contract with any person or corporation for a water supply and dispose of water otherwise on such terms as it sees fit; to purchase, construct, own and operate either for itself or in conjunction or cooperation with other corporations, a lighting plant, or plants. electricity, or other luminance or luminance and to dispose of said luminance by sale otherwise, on such terms as it sees fit; to construct warehouses, factories and buildings of all kinds. whether for dwelling, mercantile, manufacturing or other purposes, and to deal in the same through purchase of sale generally. or to operate the same; to lay drains and sewers and to operate same in conjunction with any developments which it may be engaged in; to operate dairies or abattoirs, to open up streets or parks; to plant or cultivate land, and to dispose of the products thereof. 173

Clearly, Rhett and his partners were leaving the new company open to any and all development possibilities. What is less clear is why Rhett and his associates felt compelled to create the company in the first place. It may have been a matter of accumulated obligations, payable to the North Charleston Corporation’s directors, which could somehow be written off. Unburdened of these obligations, the new company might have been regarded as a better risk by outside investors. Regardless of
the reasoning, with the North Charleston Company chartered the bulk of the property owned by the North Charleston Corporation was transferred to the new company, a total of over 2,300 acres, with over 1500 acres in Charleston County and more than 800 acres in Berkeley County.

Another asset that was also transferred to the North Charleston Company were the mortgages held on the property of the North Charleston Development Company and the Yeamans Hall Company, issued just a few months earlier. These securities, totaling $89,000, would be seen as assets on the books of the new company, since they were obligations that the two companies were required to pay. The problem, of course, was that the security of the notes was based on the value of the property backing the mortgage, and payment of the principle and interest required income to the companies. After a decade, however, the property in North Charleston held little more value than it did at its inception of the project, and there was little in the way of a land rush to purchase property in the new city, leaving little value or income for the new company.

Nevertheless, with its thousands of acres in property and securities issued by the North Charleston Development Company and the Yeamans Hall Company in hand, the North Charleston Company went in search of an outside investor, "desiring to raise money for the purpose of carrying out the objects of its charter." The Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company of Baltimore stepped in and on July 1, 1925 took a first mortgage of $200,000 on the property and "collateral securities" of the North Charleston Company. The interest rate for the securities issued by Mercantile Trust was 6 ½ percent, a half percent higher than the rate paid on securities held by the North Charleston Company. This differential was probably necessary to attract the infusion
of money from Baltimore to the South Carolina lowcountry, with its stumbling
economy and limited prospects.

Mercantile Trust issued 200 bonds of $1,000 each totaling $200,000. With this
money in hand, "North Charleston Company hereby acknowledges itself indebted to,
and promises to pay to, the bearer hereof, or if this bond be registered, to the registered
holder thereof, One Thousand Dollars in gold coin of the United States of, or equal to,
the present standard of weight and fineness, on the 1st day of July, in the year 1935, at
the banking house of Townsend Scott & Son, in the City of Baltimore, Maryland, and to
pay interest thereon from the date hereof, at the rate of six and one-half per cent. per
annum. . . ."176 The individual bonds issued by Mercantile Trust were "one of a series
of two hundred first mortgage and collateral trust six and one-half per cent. coupon gold
bonds for the principal amount of One Thousand Dollars each, said bonds aggregating
in all the principal sum of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars, and being of like tenor, date
and date of maturity, numbered from 1 to 200 both inclusive, alike and equally secured
by a first mortgage and collateral trust agreement bearing even date herewith, duly
executed and delivered by the said North Charleston Company to Mercantile Trust and
Deposit Company of Baltimore, as Trustee, mortgaging as security for the said bonds
certain real estate of the said North Charleston Company situate partly in Charleston
County, and partly in Berkeley County, South Carolina, and also pledging as additional
security for the said bonds, the following: Eleven six per cent. notes of North
Charleston Development Company in the principal amount of Five Thousand Dollars
each, aggregating Fifty-five Thousand Dollars. . . and thirty-four six per cent. notes of
Yeamans Hall Co. in the principal amount of One Thousand Dollars each, aggregating Thirty-four Thousand Dollars...”

The collateral, then for the $200,000 mortgage was land and debt that was tied to the land. The total obligation of Rhett and his associates was $289,000, consisting of the $200,000 mortgage as well as the collateral securities of $55,000 issued by the North Charleston Development Company and $34,000 issued by Yeamans Hall Company. It is unclear what motivation Mercantile Trust may have had to enter into this mortgage arrangement, though the prospect of laying hands on well over 2,000 acres of developable land in the South was probably a strong motivator. It is also unclear whether or not Mercantile realized or cared that the “collateral securities” that they now held were essentially worthless, backed as they were by land in an urban industrial development in which investment essentially had ceased. What mattered most appeared to be the land. The North Charleston Company, backed by the dwindling resources of Peoples State Bank, owned it. Mercantile Trust was apparently willing to invest considerable capital based on the prospects of a successful land development or, if the need arose, to foreclose on the mortgage and take ownership of the land.

On August 18, 1925, the Board of Directors of the North Charleston Corporation held its last meeting. Thirteen years earlier, on September 19, 1912, a visionary Board of Directors was elected “with a view to the immediate advancement and ultimate greatness of the City of Charleston as a leading commercial centre.” The board was hailed for “The foresight with which the entire plan [for North Charleston] has been conceived, the splendid optimism for Charleston’s growth which has characterized the
development, and above all the admirable energy with which this determined group of men have proved that their faith in Charleston’s future does not consist of castles in air, but is an active living principle which nerves them to inaugurate and push to its conclusion, without hesitating at any obstacles, however great, the broadest development project ever undertaken in or about Charleston. . . .”

It was in all likelihood a more subdued gathering in August 1925, as the Board “resolved that North Charleston Corporation shall go into liquidation and wind up its affairs and dissolve.” The signatories were the same men who had embarked on the “greatest development project ever undertaken” in the lowcountry, including Rhett, Montague, Hyde, Durant, Buist, and O’Hear. On September 10, 1925, Henry Buist again wrote to the Secretary of State, informing him that “You will find enclosed herewith certificate of dissolution of charter of North Charleston Corporation, signed by the President, Secretary and a majority of the Board of Directors. . . .” On September 11, 1925, the charter of the North Charleston Corporation, which had embarked on one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken to develop a new urban form in the American South, the New South Garden City, was cancelled.

The financial machinations, however, were not yet over. In January 1927, the North Charleston Development Company, which still held some unmortgaged property, used it to secure a $30,000 mortgage from Peoples-First National Bank. This bank represented “three of Charleston’s large and popular Banks now merged in this one institution.” The directors of the new bank, which included R. Goodwyn Rhett as president of the bank as well as Robert L. Montague, stated that “Their policies may be
trusted to be far seeing and thoroughly reliable, for they have proven that they know what they are doing. . . .” 182

The mortgage consisted of “Thirty... coupons, to be dated January 15th, 1927, each in the sum of One Thousand Dollars, bearing interest in the rate of seven per cent per annum.” 183 The collateral for the mortgage consisted of nine lots with houses in North Charleston, which according to the mortgage were valued at a low of $1,850 to a high of $4,500 for a total of $30,200. In addition, the North Charleston Development Company used seven blocks of unimproved land, which were divided into 187 lots, as collateral. According to the mortgage, the lots were valued at between $180 and $300. What is interesting about the valuation of these lots, all of which were located far from Silk Stocking Row or the GARCO mill villages, is that it suggests that the property values in North Charleston had increased hardly at all, since lots were selling for around $300 in 1915, when the sale of lots began. In addition to the property, the North Charleston Development Company put up as collateral the installment income being paid by residents of seven of the houses the company had previously sold. 184

As with the $200,000 from Mercantile Trust which flowed into the coffers of the companies developing the new city, it is unclear what happened to the $30,000 in this transaction as well as the $55,000 in the previous mortgage or in the $30,000 that made its way to the Yeamans Hall Company in 1925. What this means, however, is that, taking into account all the financial transactions over a period of six years, around $344,000 from a variety of sources had flowed into the coffers of the entities responsible for developing the city on Charleston Neck.
The disposition of this money is unclear, but undoubtedly it was not spent in the new city of North Charleston. There was little in the way of new construction during the period. Maps and photos from the 1930 show the road network as largely remaining fixed, for the most part unchanged from that of 1920. In all likelihood, the more than $300,000 taken in using North Charleston as either collateral for mortgages or as inducement to purchase stock remained in accounts in Peoples Bank in a vain effort to prop up the faltering bank.

The exception to this halt in development activity on the Neck was Yeamans Hall. The North Charleston Development Company and the Yeamans Hall Company contracted with Olmsted Associates in 1923 to create a land plan for a winter resort. The firm sent one of its newer associates, William Bell Marquis, late of the P. J. Berckmans Company and the United States Army, to plan the residential community. The developers also contracted with Seth Raynor, a famous golf course designer, to design the course around which the community was built. The Marquis plan for Yeamans Hall, completed in 1924, "provided for the subdivision of the site into 233 house lots centered around two golf courses and a clubhouse complex," and with its curvilinear streets and picturesque views stands very much in the tradition of suburban development employed by the Olmsted firm. The development of Yeamans Hall proceeded slowly, with the golf course and the first house lots not sold until 1926. More ambitious was the plan for the clubhouse, with an estimated cost of $150,000. Completed in 1928, "the one and one half story masonry building included a living room, foyer, sun parlor, 14 bedrooms, and a dining room capable of accommodating 200 guests."

Thus there was development on the Neck, but it was not associated with...
the urban industrial center of North Charleston which was to have been the focus of the
economic and social development of Charleston's hinterland, but on a burgeoning resort
community for wealthy, golf-playing investors from the North.

"Suburban Lots to be Sold at Auction"

As investment in the infrastructure and amenities in North Charleston ended, so
did property sales. In 1926, with the developers of the new city theoretically flush with
cash and improvements in the offing, there were only three takers for residential
properties in the city (Table 5.8). Less than an acre of residential property sold that
year, and the total acreage of property sales was just over three and a half acres. This
figure is somewhat misleading, however, because 2.8 acres, over 75 percent of the
property purchased, were in transactions with the Charleston County School Board. It
is highly unlikely that the cash strapped school board paid top dollar for the land.187

In the period 1927 to 1930, the property sales were even more dismal. Only 19
residential lots totaling just over 2.5 acres, were sold, and only four lots in the
commercial district were purchased. No lots for industrial uses were sold in the new
city, indicating the dismal state of the lowcountry economy throughout the last half of
the 1920s. To add insult to injury, in terms of the total failure of the effort to build the
city envisioned by Rhett and his partners in 1912. between 1921 and 1930 only three
lots were sold for residential purposes in Pinewood Park, once billed as "the most
beautiful residential section in the South if not the United States."188

North Charleston's failure to attract residents from the peninsular city during the
initial period of settlement, 1915 to 1925, was made even worse with the opening up of
new suburban areas to development. The first area to open up more fully to
Table 5.8
North Charleston Property Transactions
1926-1930

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Source: Charleston County RMC.
development was the area west of the Ashley River. The Ashley River had been 
bridged by a wooden structure since the 1800s, but in 1926 this bridge was replaced by 
a concrete bridge suitable for automobile traffic. This opened up extraordinary 
development possibilities in what was called West Ashley, and several developments 
quickly took shape. One of these was The Crescent, a fashionable and picturesque 215 
lot neighborhood planned by William Bell Marquis of Olmsted Brothers in 1926. Other 
developments, including a municipal golf course also designed with the assistance of 
Marquis, established West Ashley as a very desirable suburban location for Charleston. 
In fact, The Crescent, which was roughly half a mile from downtown Charleston, 
attracted many of the peninsular city’s elite that Rhett had envisioned relocating to 
Pinewood Park.

Another significant infrastructure improvement that altered the landscape of the 
lowcountry was the completion of the towering bridge over the Cooper River in 1929. 
The driving force behind the bridge over the Cooper River was John P. Grace, the Irish-
American politician who had bedeviled Rhett and his political associate Hyde 
throughout the 1910s. The bridge, which at the time of its completion was the third 
largest cantilevered bridge in the world, was “built at a cost of $6,000,000 by a private 
company, the Cooper River Bridge, Incorporated, of which Grace was president.”189 
The bridge directly connected the peninsular city with the small, sleepy fishing village 
of Mount Pleasant, previously accessible only by ferry. The purpose of the bridge, 
however, was to connect Charleston with the growing resort activities on the Isle of 
Palms. As Grace later said, “At the time the Bridge deal was made, assurances were 
given at Chicago (and we all believed it) that the Isle of Palms was backed up by a
representative group of the strongest interests in this section; that all it needed to make it the premier beach resort of the south was someone to build a bridge... Beautiful maps were shown of the projected Isle of Palms, its lakes, its golf links and hotels that were only waiting for the word ‘bridge.’”

The bridge was a failure financially. Bonds that had been issued to finance the construction were to be paid off by a $.50 a car toll. Sufficient traffic to support the bond payments never materialized, and the company went bankrupt. The Charleston County purchased the bridge in 1941, and then the state bought it from the county soon after. Tolls were lifted in 1946, and shortly thereafter the bridge was named for the individual most responsible for its construction, John P. Grace.

These two bridges, coming in the latter half of the 1920s, served to dramatically expand Charleston's hinterland to the east and west. No longer was Charleston's growth oriented only towards the Neck. This transformation opened up tremendous development opportunities on land that was much closer to the peninsular city, and therefore much more attractive than distant North Charleston. From West Ashley and East Cooper there were not long trolley rides through vast empty tracts of land. Charleston was no longer looking just to the north for its growth, but also to the east and west.

Thus the new city of North Charleston limped towards the end of the 1920s, with little in the way of positive development. Even before the stock market “crash” of October 29, 1929, the fortunes of the developers and others associated with the city had taken a turn for the worse. In 1924, Tristram T. Hyde, former mayor of Charleston and one of the original backers of the first New South Garden City, was convicted of bank...
fraud and sentenced to a year and a day in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta. His Commercial National Bank had failed in June 1922, and he stood convicted of nine counts of fraud, despite his claims that "his entire object had been to do what he thought best during the period of deflation" then sweeping the South. By January 1931, the "war-time mayor and for more than thirty years one of the city's leading citizens" was dead.

The impact of the downturn in the lowcountry economy could also be seen in the fate of North Charleston's largest employer, the General Asbestos and Rubber Company. Founded in 1895 as the Charleston Metallic Packing Company by two Charleston residents, GARCO was a very successful lowcountry industry. The company had increased its capital stock in 1902 from $8,000 to $50,000, increased it again in 1910 to $125,000, and increased it a third time in 1913 to $500,000. Then, in June 1920, with the Charleston economy still in the last stages of the post World War I boom, increased its stock to a staggering $5,000,000, stating in a resolution of the board of directors that "owing to the large increase in the volume of business done by the Company and the opportunity to further increase the same, thereby enhancing the profits, and in order to so finance the Company as to make it free or nearly so of bank credit, it is deemed advisable and to the best interest of the Company to increase its capital stock." The company issued the stock, but by 1929 a majority of the shares were held by Raybestos Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut. On September 3, 1929, the Board of Directors of GARCO, which now included a vice president of Raybestos, held its last meeting in its office at North Charleston and voted "to go into liquidation and
The Certificate of Dissolution was sent to the Secretary of State by Raybestos from its Bridgeport office, which now owned the sprawling North Charleston operation. The General Asbestos and Rubber Company was dead, and control of the major industry in the new city of North Charleston had shifted to northern industrial capitalists.

Almost two months later the stock market crashed, and the delicate financial structure holding up the North Charleston project and the bank largely responsible for its financing, Rhett’s Peoples State Bank, began to unravel. The first indication of the depths of the troubles came a year after the stock market crash, on Saturday, December 20, 1930. Robert L. Montague, 61 years of age and despondent over his financial losses, drove to his plantation in Berkeley County, ran a warm bath, climbed in, and shot himself in the head. Montague had always been a somewhat shadowy figure in Charleston, and in Charleston’s closed society was probably never fully acknowledged as a member of the city’s elite. Thus his death received minimal notice in the pages of the *News and Courier*. The only one of his partners in the North Charleston project to serve as a pallbearer was Rhett.\(^{196}\)

Rhett must have known then of the dire straits into which his financial empire was sinking. The state’s economy, led by the agricultural sector, was in a tailspin in 1930. As Edgar writes, “after nearly a decade of difficulty, South Carolina agriculture was about to go under. Farmland and buildings had lost more than one-half their value. One-third of the state’s farms were mortgaged, and 70 percent of the state’s farmers survived on borrowed money.”\(^{197}\)
By 1931, the financial woes of Rhett and Charleston came to a dramatic head with the collapse of Peoples State Bank on December 31, 1931. When the bank closed down its 44 branches, it represented one of the largest banking collapses in South Carolina’s history, and took with the City of Charleston’s payroll. Charleston was $11 million in debt and essentially had no cash. Forced to issue scrip to pay its employees and meet expenses, the city was on the verge of bankruptcy, and only saved itself by drastically cutting budgets, salaries of employees, and restructuring the city’s debt.198

The collapse of Peoples State Bank began a process in which the North Charleston Property was foreclosed and purchased by outside interests. With the collapse of the bank, all payments on the various mortgage notes held on the property of North Charleston Company as well as the North Charleston Development Company ceased. On November 4, 1932, the Mercantile Trust Company filed suit in United States District Court for the Eastern District of South Carolina, alleging “that the Corporation has defaulted and failed to perform the covenants in said Indenture of Mortgage and in said bonds in that the Corporation has failed to pay or cause to be paid the interest coupons appertaining to said bonds which matured July 1st, 1932 and has failed to pay taxes due on the mortgaged property.”199

Despite the depressed state of the lowcountry economy, Rhett and his associates had paid a considerable sum on the various mortgages and notes. Of the $200,000 mortgage from Mercantile Trust, the suit reports that the outstanding debt stood at $124,000. In addition, the suit alleges that “of the notes of North Charleston Development Company and Yeamans Hall Company... there now remains unpaid $35,000 principal...”200 All of the notes of the Yeamans Hall Company, which

350
represented $34,000 of collateral, had been paid to Mercantile Trust, but payments on
the notes of the North Charleston Development Company held by Mercantile Trust
ceased in September 1927. The suit alleges that the note that matured on September 15.
1927 was "sent to Peoples State Bank of South Carolina for collection and never
returned."201 Thus Rhett and his associates were still obligated to Mercantile Trust for
$124,000 for the mortgage and $35,000 for the notes issued by the North Charleston
Development Company, giving a grand total of $159,000. Though this was not an
inconsequential amount of debt, it is amazing that the various companies developing
North Charleston actually paid $130,000 to the Baltimore bank during a time when
financial conditions bordered on desperate in the South Carolina lowcountry.

On February 11, 1933, the judge in US District Court ordered that the property
of the North Charleston Company be auctioned to the highest bidder on the steps of the
United States Post Office. The money from the auction was to satisfy the company's
debt to Mercantile Trust. Under a headline in the News and Courier on March 18, 1932
reading "Suburban Lots to be Sold at Auction," the auction was held.202 There was only
one bid for the property, from Joseph L. Kerr of Baltimore, Maryland, representing the
bondholders holding notes from Mercantile Trust, which were secured by the North
Charleston property.203 Kerr bid $31,000 for the property, and thus bondholders living
outside of the lowcountry became owners of the bankrupt property once hailed as "the
greatest development project ever undertaken" in the South Carolina lowcountry.204

The financial woes associated with the North Charleston developers, however,
were not at an end. The North Charleston Development Company had assets remaining
that needed to be cleared so that the 1927 mortgage held by Peoples State Bank could
be satisfied. To this end, a complaint was filed in Charleston County court on July 22, 1933 in an effort to recover payment on the outstanding balance of the $30,000 in securities issued by the bank, using North Charleston property as security. The master appointed by the court to investigate the complaint noted in his March 13, 1934 report that "of the original issue of bonds... in the amount of $30,000, $7,000 has been retired, and that there is now outstanding, covered by the... original deed of trust. $23,000 of the said bonds, with interest from the 1st day of July, 1931." In the year before the collapse of Peoples State Bank, the source of money for the corporations developing the new city, no interest or principal was paid on the notes, probably owing to the fact that there was simply no money available.

The Master's Report went on to state "that because of the failure of the said Defendant Corporation to promptly pay the interest and principal of the said bonds, according to the terms of the said deed of trust, and to pay the taxes and assessments on the mortgaged premises, default has occurred, and that the Plaintiff Trustee is entitled to a Decree of Foreclosure." The judge concurred, and in a ruling issued on March 29, 1934, ordered "That the mortgage described in the complaint of the plaintiff be... foreclosed, and the defendant and all persons claiming by, through, or under it... be forever barred and foreclosed of all right, title, interest and equity of redemption in and to the mortgaged premises." The judge ordered the sale of nine lots with houses, seven in Pinewood Park and two in the Noisette Tract, owned by the Corporation as well as the sale of seven blocks covering 28 acres of unimproved property in the city of North Charleston.
The property was put up for auction, but not all of it sold in 1934. The unimproved property failed to attract a bidder, and one of the lots in Pinewood Park also failed to sell. The values commanded at auction, however, indicated the lack of property appreciation in the new city throughout the 1920s, despite the optimism of investors. The auction sale of the two lots in the Noisette Tract and the eight lots in Pinewood Park brought around $10,700 on property that had been valued at over $25,000 in 1927. At a second auction held in 1939, the last lot in Pinewood Park eventually sold for $2,500, far below its mortgage value of $4,500. These lots, then, which included substantial houses built by the North Charleston Development Company, brought only 42 percent of their mortgaged value.208

The unimproved property fared even worse at auction. The property failed to attract a bid at the 1934 auction, but sold at the second auction held in November 1939. The 28 acres of unimproved property on seven blocks of North Charleston sold for $2,500 at auction.209 It had been valued at $35,160, or $1,240 per acre. The bid price was substantially lower, roughly $90 per acre, approximately seven percent of the mortgage value. This suggests that the value of unimproved property in North Charleston, after nearly thirty years of development activity, was negligible.210

The last vestiges of the New South Garden City in Charleston’s Neck disappeared in 1939 with this last sale at public auction of property held by the North Charleston Development Company. The vast acreage of the North Charleston Company had been sold in 1933 for a pittance. The charters of both companies were cancelled in December 1933 by the State, thus bringing to an end the involvement of the original partners in developing the grand project that had been so clearly envisioned in
1912. Hyde and Montague were both dead, and Rhett, though still respected in the Charleston area, was living in genteel poverty. The only “survivors” of the original core group were Buist, whose law practice continued to flourish, and Durant and O’Hear, who turned their energies to making a success of Yeamans Hall, the last remaining bright spot in the huge project area.

“The Neck has Taken on the Nature of an Industrial Terrain”

Between 1931 and 1935, the period of the collapse of both Peoples State Bank and the companies created to develop the first New South Garden City, property transactions involving a paltry thirty three residential lots were completed (Table 5.9). There was little in the way of infrastructure improvements, though telephone lines were strung in the city in 1935. There was a major setback to the community, however, in terms of connectivity with the peninsular city, when the streetcar line between Charleston and North Charleston was abandoned on January 20, 1934. Streetcars were replaced by slower and less frequent bus service run by the South Carolina Power Company, which held the franchise for providing transit services in the Charleston area. The remaining lines were abandoned on February 10, 1938, and the streetcar era in Charleston was at an end.211

In terms of commercial activity, there was a distinct downturn in retail offerings in North Charleston after 1927 (Table 5.10). Between 1925 and 1927 there had been a relatively stable commercial base in the new city. The Port City Bank stood on Montague Avenue, providing a core for the commercial district. There had even been some growth in the retail sector, with five General Merchandise operations in 1925, while in 1927 there were six. In 1927, there were four grocers, a druggist, a meat...
### Table 5.9
North Charleston Property Transactions 1931-1935

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Table 5.10
North Charleston Commercial Activity, 1926-1939

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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Charleston City Directory, Walsh Directories.

market, a restaurant, a dry cleaning establishment, and a barber in the city. A shoemaker and a boarding house established operations between 1925 and 1927, suggesting that despite the woes of the lowcountry economy there was some optimism that the economy would turn around. This optimism was gone by 1931, however, reflected in the closure of three of the General Merchandise establishments and three of the grocers. Moreover, the specialty shops that gave texture to the commercial district.
including the barber, the meat market, the restaurant, and the shoemaker, vanished by 1931. Little remained of the North Charleston commercial district as the icy grip of the Great Depression closed around the lowcountry.\textsuperscript{212}

In fact, development in North Charleston stalled completely in the late 1920s and through the first half of the 1930s. Moreover, the development that was in place was unsightly and aesthetically unappealing, creating an industrial landscape that few looked upon with favor. In a 1927 article in \textit{American City} praising the Charleston area's waterfront development, the author approvingly described the peninsular waterfront, with its "stately, high and fortress-like mansions, with wide columned porches and lovely iron grills across doors, windows and gateways..."\textsuperscript{213} The writer added that "This was the first utilization... of this waterfront that otherwise might have been occupied by wharves."\textsuperscript{214} This aesthetically pleasing waterfront landscape stands in stark contrast with that to the north of the peninsular city, where "The Cooper River waterfront, with 30 feet of water at low tide and 35 at high tide, has come to be the location for the private, railroad, and city wharves, the great oil refineries and tank yards, the U.S. Navy Yard, and the U.S. Army Supply Base, now operated under lease by the city... The territory in the neck of the upper end of the peninsula has gradually taken on the nature of an industrial terrain of the port."\textsuperscript{215} Rhett and his associates had dreamed of industrial activity in the new city, but they had also dreamed of so much more. They had hoped to create an aesthetic environment in which agricultural, industrial, residential, and commercial activities would share a bucolic landscape in a New South Garden City, building in the Neck a vibrant hinterland for Charleston. Instead, a bleak industrialized landscape had emerged from the project.
Far and away the most significant addition to the industrial terrain of Charleston’s Neck after the collapse of Rhett’s financial empire was the construction in 1936 of a paper mill in the Charleston Farms area by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. Headquartered in New York City, Westvaco secured a lease of 300 acres of the Port Terminal, built by the Federal Government during World War I and turned over to the City of Charleston after the war effort was concluded. The city was more than happy to turn over property to the paper producer, hoping the increased industrial activity would pull the lowcountry out of the economic doldrums. Westvaco purchased additional property from the North Charleston Holding Company, the company established by the bondholders of Mercantile Trust to manage the real estate activities of the sprawling development.216

Construction on the paper mill began in 1936. Westvaco was lured to the lowcountry by the advantageous lease arrangement as well as “the navigation facilities and the proximity of a voluminous water supply. The waterworks tunnel from the Edisto [River] to Goose creek was completed to insure adequate water for the plant.”217 The company employed around 1,700 workers to build its $6 million plant and had a permanent workforce of around 400, many living on a nearby tract of land Westvaco purchased from the North Charleston Holding Company. Company workers were given property in the village to build their own houses. Many workers lived in the new community as well as within the bounds of North Charleston.218

Predictably, with the coming of Westvaco the pace of property transactions began to pick up. In 1936, for instance, there were 27 property sales to private individuals, which approached the total during the previous five years. The economic

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boom of which Rhett had dreamed in 1925 when he and his partners took out the $200,000 mortgage on North Charleston was finally at hand.219

Further spurring growth was investment by New Deal agencies in the lowcountry. The Public Works Agency (PWA) was the federal agency responsible for school improvements, and in 1938 expanded both the high school on Montague Avenue, near Silk Stocking Row, and the Grade School in Pinewood Park. The high school was a relatively new structure which, at the time of its opening on January 5, 1927, was reported in the newspaper to be “thoroughly modern, finely equipped, and two stories high. . . . The building as now completed cost $65,000 and offers many advantages over the former North Charleston School.”220 With the promise of better times ahead, then, the school board built a facility that “besides the generous classroom space. . . includes a domestic science department with the equipment for instruction in that branch of learning. There is also a spacious auditorium which is capable of seating 500 persons.”221

The new high school building was located on the plaza site south of Montague Avenue, representing the first major distortion of the Marquis plan, leaving the city without a formal central feature for public life. Ironically, the old school building, which stood behind the new structure, in a location reserved in the Marquis plan for “Public Buildings” burned to the ground on the evening prior to the grand opening. The cause was attributed “to a cigarette stump or faulty wiring.”222 Regardless of the cause of the fire, the placement of the new school in the plaza space ended the link between the plan for North Charleston and the City Beautiful movement, which had so inspired Rhett, Marquis, and others in the first decades of the 1900s.

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The other New Deal agency which played a significant role in the development of North Charleston was the Works Project Administration. Established in 1935, the WPA along with other federal agencies "spent $34,780,966 in Charleston and the county and pumped 6.6 million additional federal dollars into the Navy Yard between 1933 and 1939, thereby saving the county's economy from collapse." The WPA work at the Navy Yard included "piers, shipways, storehouses, a pipe shop, electric shop, and ten quarters houses 'designed in the tropical manner' and known... as the 'Panama Houses.'" The government also built a 380-bed hospital at the Navy Yard. The economic impact on North Charleston and the lowcountry was enormous, with around 1,800 workers employed on various government projects at the Yard in the latter half of the 1930s.

Property sales and commercial activity in North Charleston accelerated after 1936, fueled by the coming of Westvaco and expansion of the Navy Yard (Table 5.11). In 1936, 65 lots in North Charleston and Charleston Farms were sold to individuals, representing a substantial increase in transactions as the lowcountry economy slowly began to turn around. Sales slowed somewhat after 1936, but by 1940 they were again surging, with 60 lots sold in that year. A total of 247 lots were sold to individuals in the five year period between 1936 and 1940, far and away the most significant period of activity since the city was founded.

A further indicator of the growth of North Charleston was the surge in retail activity in the late 1930s in the Montague Avenue commercial district. Still anchored by the Port City Bank, by 1940 the district boasted three barbers and beauty shops, a dry cleaner, a dry goods establishment, three general merchandise operations, two grocers,
two restaurants, two automobile service stations, and a pool hall. Probably more indicative of the growing viability of North Charleston nearly thirty years after its conception was the presence of a library and a dance school in the city. The accoutrements of high culture had arrived in the industrial hinterland.

Still, it was a growth controlled not from the lowcountry but from outside. The operations of the major employers in the Neck, GARCO, Westvaco, and the Navy Yard, were controlled by Northern capitalists and government officials, placing North Charleston in a decidedly dependent position. As expansion at the Navy Yard continued, the lowcountry’s dependence on federal money increased. This was not the bustling city of thousands of workers and their families in working class neighborhoods surrounding elite housing facing on a spacious garden environment controlled by Charleston’s progressive business class envisioned by Rhett so many years before. The evolution of North Charleston into a city controlled by outside interests reached its logical conclusion with the approach of World War II, in which the federal government, seeking housing for its wartime work force, purchased large tracts of land in and around the new city for its own purposes. With the coming of the federal government into the
fabric of the plan created by Rhett and Marquis, the last vestiges of the grand New South Garden City were laid to rest.

"South Carolina’s Fastest Growing ‘Boom Town’"

The social and economic landscape of South Carolina’s lowcountry was fundamentally transformed with the coming of World War II. Charleston in many ways became a city dependent on the federal government for its sustenance, drawing in huge federal outlays associated with national defense. The Charleston Neck was the site for the sprawling facilities that paved the way for the lowcountry’s economic revival, as the sleepy Navy Yard was transformed into an industrial colossus and other war-related facilities sprawled across the landscape.

On the eve of the war, the planned city of North Charleston sat poised to take full advantage of the transformative powers of the war effort. With its industrial, residential, and commercial space as well as parks and other amenities, the leaders of the city prepared themselves for the sudden influx of people and money to the community. In a portrait of the planned city published in 1941 in the South Carolina Magazine, Powell wrote that “On the banks of the Cooper River, about eight miles from Charleston, the former hamlet of North Charleston is rapidly becoming a thriving industrial community. This fastest growing factory district in the South has all the aspects of a boom town, yet it is instead a permanent settlement. Although its industries are important to the defense program, the necessity for them will not pass with the coming of peace. They are lasting companies which will remain to keep North Charleston on the industrial map as a leading factory center of the South.”

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Between 1940 and 1945, the final lineaments of North Charleston were put into place. Development after 1945 largely consisted of filling in the empty spaces with unremarkable homes fronting on unremarkable streets. The grand vision that had so driven Rhett and his partners, and was designed by William Bell Marquis, had largely been forgotten. Only place names in the landscape, such as Rhett and Montague Avenues, provided any link to that past. The area north of Filbin Creek was still known as Charleston Farms, though only a handful of lowcountry residents could possibly know why it was so called, or of the vision it implied of a new urban future embodied by a New South Garden City.

The transformation of the South Carolina lowcountry into a suburban dominated region during this period can clearly be seen in its population distribution (Table 5.12). Between 1900 and 1930, the population of Charleston County was largely concentrated in the City of Charleston. During this period, over sixty percent of Charleston County’s population was located in the old peninsular city. By 1940, this began to change when, for the first time in the century, Charleston’s share of the county’s population dipped below sixty percent. By 1950, however, with the total transformation wrought by World War II, the share of the county’s population living in the City of Charleston plummeted to 43 percent. The county’s population jumped nearly 27 percent during the war and its aftermath, but the population of the City of Charleston actually fell by over 1,000 between 1940 and 1950. By 1950, the lowcountry was a fully suburbanized region, and the old peninsular city was in decline.
Table 5.12
Share of Charleston County Population in the City of Charleston, 1900-1950

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Charleston County Population</th>
<th>City of Charleston Population</th>
<th>Percent of County Population in City</th>
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<td>66</td>
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<td>1920</td>
<td>108,450</td>
<td>67,957</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>101,050</td>
<td>62,265</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>121,105</td>
<td>71,275</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>164,856</td>
<td>70,174</td>
<td>43</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

North Charleston’s population growth during the war and its aftermath was even more dramatic (Table 5.13). The population of North Charleston in 1920 was around 700 persons, while in 1930 the new city’s population had grown by roughly 35 percent to 1,073. Estimated growth between 1930 and 1940 was also significant, though not spectacular, increasing around 40 percent to nearly 1,800 persons. Most of this growth occurred in the latter years of the period, and despite its growth there remained vast tracts of pine forested land. This changed dramatically during and after the war, when the population of North Charleston increased by nearly seventy percent to 5,750. Workers and their families were finally flocking to the new city of North Charleston, though they were employed at the Navy Yard and related operations, and not at bustling industrial operations along the rail lines embracing the city.

The coming of the war profoundly reshaped the economy of the South Carolina lowcountry. As Fraser notes, “The war revived Charleston’s moribund economy. In 1941 the federal defense program poured money into the South, and South Carolina received $136.8 million, 80 percent of which went into the Charleston area. At the Navy Yard twelve new destroyers slipped down the ways, shipbuilding facilities and the...
Table 5.13
Population Change:
South Carolina, Charleston County, and North Charleston, 1900-1950

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
<th>Charleston County</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
<th>North Charleston</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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<td>11</td>
<td>164,856</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>5,750</td>
<td>69</td>
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</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

power plant were improved, and an ammunition depot and housing units constructed. . .

Payrolls at the Charleston Navy Yard topped $400,000 weekly by October 1941. In South Carolina per-capita income averaged $301, but in Charleston it averaged $856.60, and by late 1941 the Charleston Navy yard had supplanted tourism as the lowcountry’s largest industry. It was the third largest industry in the entire state.”227

The dramatic increase in activity at the Navy Yard had the greatest impact on Charleston during the war years. Employment increased substantially, such that “Civilian personnel at the Navy Yard, most of them white, increased from 6,000 in 1941 to over 28,000 two years later.”228 These employees “built some 230 destroyers or amphibious craft, converted vessels to military use, and repaired war-damaged submarines and allied surface vessels.”229 The importance of Charleston to the defense effort was enhanced by the addition of a Naval Air Station, a troop embarkation facility, an ammunition depot, a large, modern hospital, and other improvements.

The impact of all of this activity on North Charleston was huge. As the News and Courier noted in a special “Power and Defense Edition,” published five days before the attack at Pearl Harbor, “Charleston county’s booming national defense program centers largely around South Carolina’s fastest growing “boom towns”—North

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Charleston, which by mid winter may have a population of about 15,000, mostly defense workers and their families. The newspaper report, which included the area outside the planned city of North Charleston into its population figures, added that “From a modern, thriving little unincorporated town of about 4,000 persons, North Charleston already has taken on aspects of an unwieldy city.”

This “unwieldy city” was being swept by changes in the landscape that must have stunned the residents of Silk Stocking Row as well as GARCO's mill villages. As the News and Courier noted, “North Charleston is not without its growing pains. Its needs are many, and because it is not federated, there are difficulties in obtaining wants which would not be present under city government.” Clearly, community safety was one of these concerns, and the News and Courier warned that “The community must rely for police protection on a few Charleston county policemen assigned to duty there. . . When North Charleston’s population reaches its peak, this protection may prove inadequate.”

Other city services, which Rhett and his associates were never forced to address because of the city’s slow growth between 1920 and 1940, were also a problem as the city grew. The News and Courier realistically assessed the fledgling city’s many shortcomings, stating that “Samples of some of the community’s pressing needs . . . are: Enlarged garbage and sewage disposal plants; an incinerator to dispose of garbage now dumped into its marshlands; a recreation building for the increased number of defense workers and their children; home delivery of mail; even more facilities for housing the ever increasing army of defense workers; additional space for schools in the community where some schools have realized an increase of about 100 percent over last year; a
more adequate system for placing trailer dwellers, who now are scattered about in several ill-kept camps; funds for increasing the community's fire fighting staff and equipment; the paving of several roads leading to the community center, and increased police protection. This litany of unaddressed needs clearly spells out the stresses placed on the residents who had been in North Charleston since the 1910s and 1920s by the rapidly growing population. With increasing garbage thrown into its marshes, inadequate police and fire protection, and families living in trailers and campers on the fringes of the city, long term residents must have felt like strangers in their own community. In addition, the litany of problems indicates that there had been little in the way of infrastructure improvements prior to the war, since roads in the "community center" were still in need of paving.

This rapid transformation of Charleston's Neck evinced a trace of nostalgia in the boosterish News and Courier, even as it trumpeted the growing economic dynamism of the lowcountry. The newspaper noted wistfully that "Not long ago, North Charleston was just another small South Carolina town, just like any other in the State. It was modern and progressive." The newspaper, however, felt compelled to note that "Although it is but about ten miles from historic Charleston, the two bear not the slightest resemblance. In North Charleston there are few landmarks or historic buildings." Remembering its mission to boost growth, the report hastened to add that "The residences are modern and roomy." To address the pressing needs of the rapidly growing community, leaders of North Charleston proposed hiring a manager to take charge of the unincorporated city. As the News and Courier reported in the summer of 1941, "Efforts are being made now
to find a competent manager who could take over details of administration now parceled out among a few busy businessmen.” The report noted, however, that “The leaders of the community are opposed to incorporation, which would involve a costly and unwieldy political setup.” The newspaper outlined the administrative difficulties in managing the burgeoning city, stating that “If the right man is found, he will be given duties under the public service commission, which has charge of street lights, sewerage, fire protection and garbage disposal, and the parks and playgrounds commission, which hopes to organize a comprehensive program for beautifying the community and providing sports. He also would serve as a sort of chamber of commerce secretary, to act as a clearing house for information, probably under the auspices of the Civitan club.” The “right man” for this difficult and fragmented job was never found.

The workers and their families drawn to North Charleston during the war years had a profound impact on the city’s economy. As the News and Courier noted in its 1941 special edition, “At the Port City bank savings accounts have doubled, deposits have doubled, accounts have doubled, and, in many instances, salaries have doubled.” The newspaper breathlessly reported that “The national defense effort has brought into this section thousands of workers, few of whom are paid less than $25 weekly. Wage scales are unprecedented, merchants have reported.” Having survived the lean years of the 1920s and 1930s, however, North Charleston’s small merchant class was not about to let this opportunity, as “The high wages are offset partly by the increased cost of rentals, food and other necessities, and merchants have pointed out that this has created a virtual local inflation.”
Prosperity had finally come to North Charleston, though it was a very different prosperity than was envisioned by the city's founders. These founders, however, for the most part were gone, unable to witness the phenomenal growth of the city they had created. Hyde and Montague were dead before the collapse of Peoples State Bank brought the lowcountry economy to the brink of disaster. Durant had passed away in 1934 in New York City after a long illness. And Robert Goodwyn Rhett, the visionary who foresaw a new town appearing on Charleston's Neck, passed away in April 1939, just as prosperity was returning to his beloved Charleston. As the *News And Courier* opined at his passing, "Some day, when the worried years have sunk out of memory, students will study the records of Charleston between the early nineties and 1939 and, writing history, they will set down that Goodwyn Rhett was one of the foremost men in Charleston life, that all his efforts were for its good life. They will go beyond that and say that his deep concern was for all South Carolina and for his country. He loved to work for the public with a love untainted by vanity or by selfishness."37

Of the original partners, only O'Hear and Buist witnessed the explosive growth of North Charleston. O'Hear had become deeply involved in managing the Yeamans Hall resort project in the mid-1920s as the development of North Charleston stalled. He also left a tremendous mark on Charleston, particularly in the late 1920s in laboring on the first zoning ordinance for the City of Charleston, ratified in 1931. O'Hear passed away in 1943. Henry Buist was the last of the partners to die, passing away in 1946 after a long and successful law career.39
Thus, the original visionaries of the first New South Garden City were not involved in the dramatic changes that swept over North Charleston during the war years. The pace and style of development were controlled from outside the lowcountry. Outside interests, specifically the federal government, were eyeing large tracts of the pine covered acreage for its burgeoning workforce. North Charleston was soon to become a dependency of the United States government.

As the federal government turned its eyes towards Charleston’s Neck, property sales in North Charleston and Charleston Farms soared (Table 5.14). In 1941, property sales topped 100 lots for the first time since 1917. Though there was a slight dip in 1942, sales roared back in 1943, 1944, and 1945, as property in North Charleston was snapped up by eager buyers. In total, over 700 lots were sold to individual purchasers during the war years, exclusive of the large tracts purchased by the government, setting the stage for the eventual build-out of North Charleston in the 1950s.  

In terms of commercial activity, the war years also saw tremendous changes in North Charleston. The *News and Courier* reported in the summer of 1941 that “Most of the North Charleston people do their shopping in Charleston. It is estimated that 75 percent of their purchases is (sic) done in the city.” The newspaper further noted that “There are comparatively few stores in North Charleston, though there are indications that more will be built as the population climbs.”

The retail sector in the city grew quickly during the war years as new merchants arrived to service the growing population. As the *News and Courier* reported in 1941, on the eve of the boom, “Visitors to North Charleston never fail to be amazed by the
Table 5.14
North Charleston Property Transactions, 1941-1945

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
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<td>91</td>
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<td>179</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>131</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>197</td>
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</table>

Source: Charleston County RMC.

rapid changes taking place. On every hand are signs of new construction, and the town has a bustle and expectancy that indicate busy times ahead. Construction of a motion picture house on Montague avenue is well advanced, and a new post office soon will be built.\textsuperscript{243} The core of the commercial district was still Port City Bank, but 1942 saw the opening of a savings and loan association, which provided another outlet for financial activity. The usual complement of barbers, beauty parlors, grocers, and general merchandise establishments was augmented by the opening of a furniture store in the commercial district, which meant that for the first time residents of the Neck could purchase washing machines, water heaters, refrigerators, rugs, and other large items in North Charleston. Moreover, there were three restaurants in the city, which had not seen a full service restaurant since the closing of the Elite. Thus, as war raged in Europe, a family in North Charleston could actually go out to dinner and catch a movie at the Port Theater, all on Montague Avenue. More indicative of the growth and prospects for long term health of the community was the opening of a second physician’s practice to compete with the city’s first doctor, who had opened his office in 1921.\textsuperscript{244}
### Table 5.15
North Charleston Commercial Activity, 1940-1945

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1942</th>
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<tr>
<td>Auto Repair</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Barber/Beauty Shop</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Billiard Parlor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleaning and Pressing</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Dry Goods</td>
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<td>General Merchandise</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety Store</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Charleston Directory, Walsh Directories.

By 1944, the commercial district was a beehive of activity. The Port City Bank and Cooper River Savings and Loan continued to provide financial services to the...
population. A third barber shop, two additional beauty parlors, and a second drug store opened in the city, giving residents numerous retail options. A department store, which featured a full line of clothing, jewelry, and other goods formerly found only in peninsular Charleston, also opened in the city. Providing texture to the commercial district was a florist shop and several fruit stands as well as a gift shop. The Port Theater provided the focus for entertainment in the city, and suggestive of the growing transience of the North Charleston’s population was the increase in restaurants and lunchrooms from three to eleven. Also indicative of changes in the community was the opening of the first liquor store as well as the establishment of the first law practice in North Charleston.²⁴⁵

The city that Rhett and his associates had envisioned in 1912 was finally emerging thanks to the human disaster of war. People and money poured into the city, and merchants established businesses where before there had been only vacant lots. There were enough residents in the city and surrounding area to support not one but two doctors, two drug stores, and an attorney. The city that developed during the war years was not what Rhett had imagined, yet it was a vibrant community developing with a sound plan, thanks in large measure to the fundamental strength of the Marquis plan. However, the federal government, the single largest builder in the city during the war years, seriously distorted not only the morphology but also the intent of the original plan, which had drawn together Garden City and City Beautiful design principles in a new urban form nearly thirty years before.
“It Seemed Some Super Magician was Directing the Work”

Essentially all of the development of North Charleston prior to the war had occurred to the east of the circular park that Marquis had planned as a contemplative space with landscaped walkways and a spectacular fountain standing at the center of the city. Vast tracts of undeveloped land covered much of the cityscape, with only Silk Stocking Row and the two GARCO mill villages bearing any resemblance to a heavily settled or urbanized area. As the *News and Courier* noted in 1945, looking back as the war was winding down,

A few years ago there was a dense pine forest that stretched from Park Circle at North Charleston to the negro section at Liberty Hill. Montague avenue was an unpaved road through this wooded area. On its south side was Durant avenue, along which a few houses had been built, but otherwise there was not even a hut in the forest of trees, and except for a few rambling paths this small forest was unbroken. Game birds, rabbits and now and then a deer could be found by hunters who plowed through the dense undergrowth of these acres. No effort had ever been made to clear it, for it was too overgrown for farmland, and the need for timber had not yet made it necessary to cut the hundreds of pine trees. It was a wild, wooded section owned by the North Charleston Holding corporation, which probably had its eye on future lumbering operations and considered the possibility of residential development far in the future.246

In an indication of how quickly the vision of Rhett and his associates to plan and build a new city on the Neck had been forgotten, the newspaper added that “In those days it would have seemed a wild dream to picture this section filled with attractive homes, paved streets, well-kept lawns, with hundred of families living there as naturally as if it had always been an area of homes. Charleston had grown a little to the north, but progress was slow and there were many miles between the populated sections of the navy yard and North Charleston.”247

Expansion of federal facilities at the Navy Yard as well as at the Port Terminal necessitated the development of this pine forest, bringing new housing and other
improvements to North Charleston as well as the surrounding area. Several apartment
and single-family residential communities were constructed by the government or by
other governmental agencies and even private developers seeking to take advantage of
the influx of workers. These and other projects transformed the landscape of the Neck.
Three of these projects had a direct impact on the morphology of North Charleston: the
United Services Organization (USO) recreation building at Park Circle. John C.
Calhoun Homes, and Palmetto Gardens (Figure 5.10).

It was clear by 1941 that North Charleston offered little in the way of
recreational opportunities, despite the fact that the Marquis plan incorporated an
extensive system of parks and playgrounds. By the time of the war, however, a great
sense of urgency swept the community, facing a growing population with no available
recreational outlets. Community leaders stated that “a $75,000 recreation center to
serve North Charleston, the ordinance depot, the navy yard and the new army
embarkation center are regarded as foremost needs.” The leaders proposed that “The
recreation building would be built adjacent to the high school athletic field, and would
be equipped with gymnasium, public library, reading and game rooms and an outdoor
swimming pool.”

The proposed facility was not built, but instead the United States government in
1942 constructed a recreation building in the circular park in the center of North
Charleston. Envisioned by Rhett and designed by Marquis to be a contemplative space
in a bucolic setting of trees and landscaping surrounding a central fountain, the
government chose that spot for its USO club. With that decision, the aesthetic design
based on Garden City and City Beautiful principles was abandoned. The USO building was architecturally undistinguished, but more importantly the construction of the
building in the central park set the stage for the transformation of what came to be known as "Park Circle" from a tranquil space to a recreational space. The Progressive Era vision of the Marquis plan, with its civic plazas and contemplative central park, was largely erased from the landscape.

At the conclusion of the war the government closed the facility as a USO operated club and deeded possession to the Cooper River Parks and Playgrounds Commission, the independent governmental body in Charleston's north area responsible for such facilities. As the News and Courier reported, "The final night of the U.S.O. operation will be marked by a dance. Brief addresses will be made and service pins will be awarded to volunteers who have assisted in various community services." In addition to the speeches and ceremonial transfer of the keys to the building, the newspaper noted that "Carl Russell, who trained the Park circle boxing team that won the junior section trophy in the recent Golden Gloves tournament, will be awarded a service pin and introduce the team." This was hardly the activity envisioned by Marquis when he laid out his plans for the landscaped park at the heart of the new city.

The government had paved streets around Park Circle, opening the space up to recreational possibilities. With the transfer of the building to the local community in 1946 and the eventual transfer of ownership of the entire park area to the recreation commission, the role of the central feature in the city changed dramatically. The planted walkways, which time and neglect had largely obliterated, gave way to baseball fields, and any remnants of the fountain that so exemplified the vision of the Rhett and Marquis' plan for a garden space in the center of a New South Garden City was
replaced by bleachers and a concession stand. Only the circular drives stand as curious reminders of an urban vision from the Progressive Era in the New South.

The most pressing need in the Neck, and in the country as a whole, however, was the provision of adequate housing. "Housing," the generally conservative News and Courier noted without a trace of irony in 1941, "which had been a problem for social workers joining a nationwide movement to improve the living conditions of the low income worker, in the last two years has become a defense problem in Charleston. The problem has been aggravated by the national defense activities at the Charleston navy yard, the United States army ordinance depot and the Stark general hospital."252

The newspaper reported approvingly that "During 1940 and 1941, a total of more than $5,300,000 has been spent in general contracts for housing in Charleston county,"253 a fact that five years before would have raised the ire of the conservative paper.

The Charleston Neck was the site for the largest of these housing projects as the United States began gearing up for war. As the News and Courier reported, "The principal signs of activity, of course, are the vast housing projects being built for defense workers. These total 1,800 dwelling units, completed or under construction in the North Charleston area. . . . These 1,800 homes would house a minimum of 7,000 persons, probably more."254

Two of these housing projects directly effected North Charleston: John C. Calhoun Homes and Palmetto Gardens. Named after the fiery secessionist leader, Calhoun Homes was a planned residential community situated within an undeveloped section of North Charleston. Half of the project was located on the property purchased by Ashby at auction in 1939 as part of the foreclosure sale of the assets of the North
The Charleston Development Company. The other half of the project property was purchased from the North Charleston Holding Corporation.

The 50 single family residences and 150 duplexes of Calhoun Homes represented the first application of "demountable construction" in North Charleston. Demountable homes were a significant feature in the wartime landscape, lauded for the speed with which they could be completed. Dubbed "housing in a hurry," demountable homes were prefabricated in a factory and shipped to a building site where, under favorable conditions, a house could be completed in a matter of hours. The News and Courier noted approvingly in a report detailing the steps in construction that the house "stands... solid and sturdy as any other house, with all electric and plumbing connections ready for the screwing on or plugging in of fixtures, but capable of being taken apart in a jiffy and re-erected just as swiftly somewhere else." Construction was based on principles of standardization, with pre-fabricated panels held in place by double headed nails, all bound together by metal bands covered by asbestos shingles on the walls and asphalt shingles on the roof. As the News and Courier reported, "A major secret of quick erection is the ease with which entire pre-fabricated walls can be slid into place by [a] tongue and groove principle. When set, the sections are tied down by the use of metal strips and double headed nails." The homes were comfortable though not spacious, and "each unit with two or three bedrooms, has a refrigerator, oil range, space heater and hot water heater."

The Calhoun Homes project, budgeted at $719,965, was constructed by the Defense Homes Corporation with funding from the Federal Works Agency. Management of the complex was the responsibility of the Housing Authority of the City.
of Charleston. The project was initially designed to house military personnel and their families stationed at the army ordnance depot, but the residents eventually included workers for other military facilities as well.\textsuperscript{258} Calhoun Homes represented a step up in quality of life for most of its residents. Though the project was clearly intended as worker housing, the News and Courier noted that “Streets in the Calhoun Homes section are all hard surfaced and have such names as Willow, Cedar, Poplar and Cypress. There is a community hall where many parties and dances are held, and altogether the spirit of neighborliness is greatly in evidence.”\textsuperscript{259}

Calhoun Homes was situated within the fabric of the Marquis plan, just off of Durant Avenue. The development did not completely distort the Marquis plan, though the design aesthetics of the project were rudimentary at best. The street network was not part of the Marquis plan and consisted of an arcing triangle with two cross streets. Though paved, the streets were built without curbing or gutters, and not all of the housing units fronted on a street. Other than the community hall, there was little in the way of amenities planned for the community. The housing itself was architecturally undistinguished, resembling military barracks housing adapted for families. Design flaws aside, however, a more serious issue represents the introduction by the government of multifamily residential uses into the fabric of North Charleston, opening the door to encroachment by duplexes, apartments, and other uses into the city. Thus Calhoun Homes represents a further erosion of the already problematic land use controls as well as the weak design aesthetic under which the city struggled.

The construction of the recreational center in Park Circle and Calhoun Homes permanently altered the Marquis plan for North Charleston, and Palmetto Gardens, the
third government built project in North Charleston, represented a further distortion of
the plan. Palmetto Gardens was praised by the News and Courier in 1945 “as the most
attractive of all the wartime housing projects in suburban Charleston.”260 The 250 unit
single family residential subdivision was planned and built “to provide adequate
housing for war workers and for army and navy officer personnel.”261 The housing,
therefore, in Palmetto Gardens was much more substantial than that of Calhoun Homes
or the nearby sprawling apartment communities which provided housing for civilian
workers or enlisted personnel and their families.

Palmetto Gardens was situated to the west of Park Circle straddling Montague
Avenue, in an area that was completely undeveloped. The Defense Homes Corporation,
which purchased around 47 acres from the North Charleston Holding Corporation in
March 1941, contracted with Dawson Engineering Company of Charleston to plan and
construct the community. The plan for Palmetto Gardens, which resembled a Defense
Homes project in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, incorporated curvilinear streets, several
of which were drawn from the original Marquis plan. The park in the Marquis plan
located in the area purchased for the subdivision, however, was abandoned in favor of
two linear parks through the community. This alteration to the original plan represents
an improvement, since these park spaces also provide drainage for the area,
incorporating a small branch of Filbin Creek that Marquis apparently disregarded in his
plan.

The quality of design and implementation were evident in Palmetto Gardens,
which cost around $800,000 to complete.262 In terms of the street plan and property
subdivision in the community, the News and Courier noted that “Running through
Palmetto Gardens are seven streets that were paved during the period of construction. Each house is on a separate graded, landscaped lot, and occupants have shown their pride in the homes by cultivating flower gardens, planting shrubbery and otherwise improving their premises.\textsuperscript{263} The newspaper added that “The tall pines of the old forest were left to provide a rustic setting.”\textsuperscript{264}

In terms of the homes in Palmetto Gardens, they were not demountable structures but were much more substantial, giving an appearance of permanence to the neighborhood. The project incorporated many design elements intended to add to the neighborhood’s aesthetics and quality of life. As the \textit{News and Courier} reported, “Although every home looks different, there actually are only six different patterns and two sizes, five-room and six room houses. Each house is equipped with an electric range, refrigerator, water heater and oil-burning floor heater.”\textsuperscript{265}

The street plan for Palmetto Gardens, however, significantly altered the Marquis plan for the city (Figure 5.11). The planners for Palmetto Gardens chose to truncate “The Boulevard,” the broad landscaped roadway that was to link the city together and provide a boundary between the elite residential area of Pinewood Park and the surrounding middle class housing. This road should have run through the center of Palmetto Gardens, but the community’s planners chose to sever that link, which permanently distorted Rhett and Marquis’ plan for a grand boulevard, based on principles associated with the Garden City and the City Beautiful. Thus was erased the morphological unity of the design for the city created three decades earlier.

As the transformations brought on by war continued, the owners of large tracts of land in North Charleston, including the Defense Homes Corporation and the North
Charleston Holding Corporation, sought to protect their investment by updating and recording the restrictive covenants originally placed on the property in 1915. In covenants recorded in February 1942, the Holding Corporation, which owned the lion’s share of the property, extended until January 1, 1960 the covenant which stated that property in the city could not “be sold, devised or donated to, or owned, used or occupied in whole or in part, by any person not of the White or Caucasian race. . .”266

Other restrictions, such as street paving by property owners and the right of the corporation to establish a police force, were dropped. The Holding Corporation, in its
updated covenants, lowered the minimum value of residential construction in Pinewood Park from $3,000 to $2,850. Pinewood Park remained the only part of the city with a minimum construction value. The Holding Company felt compelled to continue the restriction, first established in 1915, which stated that “No privy shall be erected or used on the property...” an indicator that new property owners needed reminders that North Charleston was planned as a modern urban area.

The Defense Homes Corporation was allowed to issue its own “protective covenants” for Palmetto Gardens. Recorded on June 25, 1941, the covenants firmly established that the neighborhood was to be a single family residential area, stating that “No structures shall be erected, altered, placed, or permitted to remain on any residential building plot other than one detached single-family dwelling not to exceed one and one-half stories in height...” The covenants also restricted building lots to no less than 5,000 square feet and required that “No dwelling costing less than $3,000 shall be permitted on any lot in the tract.” The Corporation felt it necessary to add that “No trailer, basement, tent, shack, garage, barn, or other outbuilding erected in the tract shall at any time be used as a residence temporarily or permanently, nor shall any structure of a temporary character be used as a residence.” The covenants also stated, without any expiration date, that “No persons of any race other than the Caucasian race shall use or occupy any building or any lot, except that this Covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant.”

Palmetto Gardens was completed on December 7, 1941, and all of the 250 units were immediately occupied. With construction occurring nearly everywhere in North Charleston, a city was at last taking shape. Waxing nostalgic as the war wound down,
the *News and Courier* imagined an “old-timer” returning after an absence of several years. The newspaper observed that “This old-timer would find the forest where he once hunted rabbits and deer gone and only the tall pines remaining; he would find Durant avenue resurfaced and lined with homes, Montague avenue paved and widened and running through the beautiful residential section that is now Palmetto Gardens; he would find in the John C. Calhoun Homes hundreds of families who are engaged in essential industry and living happily in their comfortable homes after having come to Charleston from many far places; he would find on Park circle a large community club building operated by the U.S.O.” The newspaper added that “The returning old-timer would, in short, find that in his absence more than 20 years of normal progress had been effected in a few short years. He would be no more astonished than were those who stayed at home and saw the transformation which came so swiftly that it seemed some super magician was directing the work instead of men and machines hurried by the demands of war.”

There in fact had been a “super magician” directing the work. The federal government, as part of its war effort, had magically transformed the landscape of North Charleston. By the end of World War II, North Charleston was as much a creature of the United States government as a creation of Rhett and his associates. The morphology of the city was no longer a creation of Marquis but was now altered by the exigencies of war time planning. In terms of the economic landscape, the federal government had also exercised magical and transformative powers. The operations employing the bulk of North Charleston’s work force were government based, including the US Naval Base, created in 1945 to include the shipyard, the hospital, the
ammunition depot, and all other naval activities, GARCO, whose operations were now largely based on government contracts, and Westvaco, which provided services to both government and private industry.

Figure 5.12

North Charleston at Build-Out, 1950
(Note: The large oval feature at the upper left was a government housing project, Century Oaks, that was not part of the original planned city)

The city that emerged from World War II was not the New South Garden City envisioned by Rhett and designed by Marquis. It bore the faint tracings of the original plan, though permanently altered by the heavy hand of the government. The plazas
which Marquis had imagined as the center of civic life in the new city had been given over to a high school building and ball fields; the central park, which had been planned as a contemplative space with landscaped walkways and a splashing fountain, housed a recreation center known for its boxing team; and the landscaped boulevard which was planned to bind the city together, providing a pleasurable experience of strolling through a picturesque urban landscape, was severed, permanently altering the unified cityscape envisioned by Rhett and embodied in the Marquis plan. Few could recall why streets bore the names of Rhett, Montague, Durant, Buist, Hyde, O’Hear, Marquis, and Berckmans, much less that a bold urban vision, firmly rooted in Progressive Era planning principles, had motivated this group to seek a new urban future for Charleston’s hinterland. As the North Charleston Holding Corporation and its successor, the North Charleston Lands Company, completed the road network and other infrastructure required for the city, North Charleston entered its final phase of its development. The stage for the city’s build-out, however, was set not by the city’s founders but by the transforming hand of a “super magician” whose requirements superseded the urban vision of Rhett and Marquis, now lost to the corridors of time.

End Notes

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.

11 News and Courier, 22 June 22 1915.


13 News and Courier, 21 March 1938.

14 News and Courier, 2 May 2 1915.

15 Ibid.

16 News and Courier, 24 June 1912.

17 News and Courier, 23 May 1913.

18 News and Courier, 22 June 1915.

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96 *News and Courier*, 22 December 1916.


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392
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132 Ibid.

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134 Moore, 46.

135 Fraser, 363.


137 Ibid.

138 *News and Courier*, 16 January 1917.

139 *News and Courier*, 23 May 1915.


141 *News and Courier*, 8 July 1917.

142 Ibid.

143 *News and Courier*, 8 February 1918.

144 Moore, 45-46.

145 *News and Courier*, 4 July 1919.

146 Preservation Consultants, Inc.; Fraser, 364.

147 *News and Courier*, 18 June 1916.


149 "Melgrove, SC, 1919"


151 *News and Courier*, 18 June 1916.
Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930; “Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds,” Charleston County RMC Office.

*Charleston City Directory*, Walsh, 1919-1922.

*Charleston City Directory*, Walsh, 1919-1931; “Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds,” Charleston County RMC Office.

James O’Hear, “General Map of Resubdivision of North Charleston. February 1925.”

Edgar, 480.

Ibid., 481.

Ibid.

Ibid., 481-482

Ibid., 482.

Ibid.

Ibid., 485.

“Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds,” Charleston County RMC Office.


“Melgrove South Carolina, 1919”; James O’Hear, “General Map. . . February 1925:: “Trust Deed, North Charleston Development Company to Peoples-First National Bank of Charleston,” (Charleston County RMC Book R-34, Page 16, January 25, 1927); one of the houses that appeared on the 1919 Melgrove Quadrangle in the Pinewood Park area is not included on the O’Hear map, and presumably was destroyed, possibly by fire.

167 News and Courier, 18 June 1919.

168 Ibid.

169 “First Mortgage and Collateral Trust Agreement, North Charleston Company to Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company,” (Charleston County RMC Book M-33, page 1, July 1, 1925).

170 Ibid.

171 Letter from Buist to Blackwell, 13 June 1925, North Charleston Company file, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

172 Ibid.


174 “First Mortgage and Collateral Trust Agreement, North Charleston Company to Mercantile Trust and Deposit Company,” (Charleston County RMC Book M-33, page 1, July 1, 1925).

175 Ibid.

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.

178 News and Courier, 23 May 1913.


180 Letter from Buist to Blackwell, 10 September 1925, North Charleston Corporation file, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

181 News and Courier, 5 January 1927.

182 Ibid.


184 Ibid.

186 Ibid.

187 "Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds," Charleston County RMC Office.

188 "Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds," Charleston County RMC Office; *News and Courier* 7 May 1915.


190 Quoted in Rosen, 142-143.

191 Ibid., 143.

192 *News and Courier*, 16 December 1924.


194 "Resolution of GARCO Board of Directors," June 20, 1920, GARCO file, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

195 "Resolution of GARCO Board of Directors," September 3, 1929, GARCO file, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.


197 Edgar, 485.

198 Fraser, 379.


200 Ibid., 14.

201 Ibid., 15.

202 *News and Courier*, 18 March 1933.

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The bid price at the 1939 auction was $4,500 for both the lot in Pinewood Park and the unimproved property. Based on the previous valuations, $2,000 is a reasonable amount to assign to the lot and the balance of $2,500 is assigned to the unimproved acreage.
218 Preservation Consultants, Inc., 58, 59.

219 "Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds," Charleston County RMC Office.

220 *News and Courier*, 4 January 1927.

221 Ibid.

222 *News and Courier*, 5 January 1927.

223 Fraser, 380.

224 Preservation Consultants, Inc., 62.

225 "Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds," Charleston County RMC Office.


227 Fraser, 387, emphasis in original.

228 Ibid., 388.

229 Ibid.

230 *News and Courier*, 2 December 1941.

231 Ibid.

232 Ibid.

233 Ibid.

234 *News and Courier*, 22 July 1941.

235 *News and Courier*, 2 December 1941.

236 *News and Courier*, 19 November 1934.

237 *News and Courier*, 18 April 1939.

238 *News and Courier*, 25 September 1943.
239 News and Courier, 8 November 1946.

240 "Direct Index to Conveyances and Miscellaneous Deeds," Charleston County RMC Office.

241 News and Courier, 22 July 1941.

242 Ibid.

243 Ibid.

244 Charleston City Directory, Walsh, 1942.

245 Charleston City Directory, Walsh, 1944.

246 News and Courier, 27 August 1945.

247 Ibid.

248 News and Courier, 22 July 1941.

249 Ibid.

250 News and Courier, 26 February 1946.

251 Ibid.

252 News and Courier, 2 December 1941.

253 Ibid.

254 Ibid.

255 News and Courier, 30 November 1942.

256 Ibid.

257 News and Courier, 27 August 1945.


259 News and Courier, 27 August 1945.

260 Ibid.

400
261 Ibid.

262 *News and Courier*, 2 December 1941.


264 Ibid.

265 Ibid.


267 Ibid.

268 "Defense Homes Corporation to Charleston County. Protective Covenants." (Charleston County RMC Book L-41, page 703, June 25, 1941).

269 *News and Courier*, 27 August 1945.

270 Ibid.
Chapter 6

Creating the New South Garden City

North Charleston represents the first attempt to create a New South Garden City. It was not to be the last, however, as in several locations in the American South between 1915 and 1930 there were efforts to create new cities which drew together agricultural and industrial activities in a planned urban space. For a variety of reason it is difficult to draw a direct connection between North Charleston and subsequent efforts to create a New South Garden City, but there is ample evidence that the vision of Ebenezer Howard as well as the City Beautiful aesthetic as realized by Rhett and Marquis at North Charleston had an influence beyond the borders of the South Carolina lowcountry. Clearly, North Charleston fits into a broader project by New South boosters to create a new urban form that promised to bring progress and prosperity to this struggling region of North America.

Characterizing the New South Garden City

Based on the plan for North Charleston, several questions emerge. What were the characteristics of this new urban form that emerged in the South during the Progressive Era in the first decades of the twentieth century? In addition, how did the New South Garden City differ from the original Garden City envisioned by Howard at the turn of the century? Contrasting these two urban forms reveals not only their intimate connections, but also the filter through which New South progressive capitalists passed Howard’s ideas, altering them to fit the economic and social conditions of the South. These characteristics, including size, population, form,
function, and control, frame the basis from which springs the New South Garden City as created in the first decades of the last century.

Size

Ebenezer Howard’s vision of the Garden City was clear in terms of size, stating in *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* that “The reader is asked to imagine an estate embracing an area of 6,000 acres. . . .” Likewise, the New South Garden City required considerable acreage. The entire development of North Charleston called for an area encompassing around 5,000 acres. In addition, in Howard’s ideal the city proper was to cover around 1,000 acres, which corresponds well to the plan for North Charleston, which covered 1,500 acres. In Howard’s plan the balance of the acreage was given over to agricultural purposes as well as for charitable institutions. In the North Charleston project the balance of the acreage was for Charleston Farms, which corresponds well to Howard’s vision of the Garden City.

Population

Howard was relatively clear in his statements concerning the number of residents in his planned Garden City. As he wrote, “Asking the friend. . . what the population of this little city may be, we are told about 30,000 in the city itself, and about 2,000 in the agricultural estate. . . .” Howard was also clear how the Garden City was to handle population growth, writing “Let me introduce. . . the true principle on which all towns should grow. Garden City has, we will suppose, grown until it has reached a population of 32,000. How shall it grow? . . . It will grow by establishing. . . another city some little distance beyond its own zone of ‘country,’ so that the new town will have a zone of country of its own.”

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New South boosters dreamed of cities with a population approaching 32,000. Rhett's vision for North Charleston as embodied in the Marquis plan allowed for a population of around 30,000. This would have represented a sizeable city in the rural dominated South of the early twentieth century. New South visionaries such as Rhett in all likelihood gave little though to establishing new cities when the planned cities became "built up," to use Howard's phrase, since the prospects for reaching that point involved dreams beyond the ken of even the most starry-eyed visionary.

Form

In terms of design, both the Garden City as envisioned by Howard and the New South Garden City of Rhett and his associates looked to professional planners. Clearly, neither type of city was meant to grow in a haphazard fashion, but instead was to be fully designed in terms of its road and rail networks, parks, schools, as well as residential, commercial, and industrial zones. As Howard wrote, "It is not by any means necessary, and it is not, humanly speaking, possible, that the final scheme should be the work of one mind. It will no doubt be the work of many minds—the minds of engineers, of architects and surveyors, of landscape gardeners and electricians."

Howard made explicit, however, "that there should be unity of design and purpose, that the town should be planned as a whole, and not left to grow up in a chaotic manner as has been the case with all English towns, and more or less so with the towns of all countries."

In terms of morphology, Howard presented only a generalized diagram in his work, though he provided an extensive written description of the Garden City, detailing roadways, commercial areas, industrial zones, and other features. In Howard's diagram
and description, the Garden City is centered on a circular park, with broad avenues radiating outward. The Marquis plan for North Charleston was clearly based on principles associated with this design. In addition, Marquis drew on the City Beautiful aesthetic, which incorporated bold civic centers in its ideals, for his plan for North Charleston. The plaza spaces on Montague Avenue were intended to form the center of civic life in the new city, thus combining in his plan the Garden City of Howard and the City Beautiful of Robinson in a dynamic urban environment.

Howard’s plan also called for multiple industrial sites along rail lines which girdled the city. This morphological feature was also used in the Marquis plan for North Charleston, with numerous industrial spaces surrounding the city on rail spurs linking the Cooper River waterfront with the main lines serving Charleston. Howard’s written description of Garden City comports well with the actual plan created by Marquis for North Charleston.

In both the Garden City and the New South Garden City, then, land uses were separate and distinct. In Howard’s description, retail uses were gathered in the center in a “Crystal Arcade,” a forerunner of the modern shopping center, while residential uses occupied the surrounding land, with a large store situated in each “ward.” Industrial uses were restricted to the periphery. In the New South Garden City of North Charleston, land uses were also distinctly separated through the creation of “divisions” which carried with them restrictive covenants which proscribed certain activities.

Thus in terms of morphology, both the Garden City and the New South Garden City as represented by North Charleston were meticulously designed urban environments. The designers were to be professionals who would create highly
stylized, almost over-designed cities, with lands uses and other activities located in distinct districts in a city of parks and landscaped boulevards. In a description that fits well both urban forms, Howard wrote that “A town, like a flower, or a tree, or an animal, should at each stage of its growth possess unity, symmetry, completeness, and the effect of growth should never be to destroy that unity, nor to mar that symmetry, but to make it more symmetrical.”

**Function**

The Garden City was not to be a company town, but was to be a functioning city with a full range of residential, commercial, and industrial activities, all surrounded by an agricultural belt of small to medium sized farms. Howard saw these activities working in concert to create a new urban form in which workers in “the town proper, with its population engaged in various trades, callings, and professions... offers the most natural market to the people engaged in the agricultural estate...” In Howard’s vision, the Garden City was a truly functioning city, with all of the opportunities of urban life with none of the chaos that he saw as the result of unplanned urban life.

Likewise, the New South Garden City was multifunctional. The majority of town planning in the South in the first years of the twentieth century involved the creation of paternalistic textile mill villages. The New South Garden City, as planned in North Charleston, was to have numerous industrial employers available to a skilled and tractable work force. Though the agricultural development of Charleston Farms did not surround the planned city of North Charleston, as in Howard’s vision, it was directly adjacent and represented substantial possibilities in terms of agricultural opportunities. Like Howard’s Garden City, the Rhett and Marquis plan for the New South Garden City
of North Charleston included numerous retail and professional spaces designed to ensure that the new city was not a “company town” but would in fact be a fully functioning city.

Control

It is in terms of control that the differences between Howard’s Garden City and the New South Garden City emerge. The control structures embodied in class, race, ownership, and governance show distinct differences between Howard’s vision and the New South variant. It is here that the filter of the social and economic structures of the American South as interpreted by New South progressive capitalists altered Howard’s ideals from a communal vision of a new urban future to a capitalist enterprise with economic development as its fundamental objective.

Though he does not directly address the issue of class in Garden Cities of To-Morrow, in Howard’s ideal city there would essentially be social equality, with no clear class distinctions within the fabric of the city. The clearest indicator of this notion is in housing quality, all of which was planned to be comparable, situated on lots that were relatively speaking, spacious and facing onto broad tree-lined avenues. The Garden City was to be a city of equals, the key of which was to be common ownership of land. As Howard writes, “Such foresight and pre-arrangement, never before exercised in an effective manner, are displayed conspicuously in the case of Garden City, where the land, as we have seen, is vested in trustees, who hold it in trust... for the whole community, so that the entire increment of value gradually created becomes the property of the municipality...” The vision was of trustees who were socially responsible individuals, all striving for the betterment of the community and all,
presumably, living in Garden City. As Howard writes, "... those who have the welfare of society at heart will, in the free air of the city, be always able to experiment on their own responsibility, and thus quicken the public conscience and enlarge the public understanding." In Howard's view, "The whole of the experiment which this book describes is indeed of this character. It represents pioneer work, which will be carried out by those who have not a merely pious opinion but an effective belief in the economic, sanitary, and social advantages of common ownership of land, and who, therefore, are not satisfied merely to advocate that those advantages should be secured on the largest scale at the national expense, but are impelled to give their views shape and form as soon as they can see their way to join with a sufficient number of kindred spirits."9

The New South Garden City as represented by North Charleston was not guided by the structural vision of equality across space and communal ownership of land. In fact, the New South Garden City of North Charleston was planned with class differences in mind, such that the elite neighborhood of Pinewood Park, with its spacious lots fronting on parks and landscaped boulevards, stood in sharp contrast to the congested working class housing planned for the Noisette Tract, which carried with it not one parcel of open space nor any amenities whatsoever. The plan for North Charleston also included a distinct middle class section, which surrounded Pinewood Park and included the streetcar suburb of Silk Stocking Row. Also indicative of the class differences embodied in the planning of North Charleston were the restrictive covenants protecting each division, which grew much less restrictive from Division A, Pinewood Park, to Division C, the working class housing of Noisette Creek.
Moreover, the notion of communal ownership of property, which was so
essential to Howard’s vision, had little salience with Progressive Era capitalists of the
New South. The idea that property was not to be bought and sold, and that any increase
in value was not to accrue to the individual owner but to the community had little
appeal to Rhett and his associates in planning North Charleston. Property was for sale.
and profits were the engine of growth and prosperity. Control, as represented by
property ownership, was to be in the hands of private individuals.

In addition to class structure, the creators of North Charleston as a New South
Garden City had to wrestle with the issue of race, which Howard would not have
needed to address. Though African Americans were included in the fabric of the plan
for North Charleston, the racial structure of the planned city was clearly based on
segregation, which represented the means of control. The African American population
was segregated to certain areas, most notably in the area adjacent to Filbin Creek, land
that was the least desirable in the new city. In addition, however, in the initial plan
African Americans were to be allowed to live in a portion of the Noisette Creek tract,
where they would be allowed to own their homes. It is difficult to discern whether or
not this inclusion represents an advance in status for African Americans in the New
South of the Progressive Era or was simply the recognition of the reality that in the
South a significant part of the population, and thus the workforce, was black.
Regardless, the African American population was allowed into the New South Garden
City, albeit in the least auspicious sections of the city.¹⁰

In terms of governance, the Garden City as imagined by Howard was also very
different from the New South variant. Howard devoted considerable space to laying out
the framework for the administration of Garden City, seeking to answer "A most
important question... regarding the extent to which municipal enterprise is to be
carried, and how far it is to supersede private enterprise."¹¹ Howard envisioned a
"Board of Management" which would be responsible for administering Garden City,
which would "at the outset, exercise great caution, and not attempt too much."¹²
Members of the board were to be drawn from the community, and the board would be
in a "greatly superior position" compared to other municipal governments, "for, by
stepping as a quasi public body into the rights of a private landlord, it becomes at once
clothed with far larger powers for carrying out the will of the people than are possessed
by other local bodies, and thus solves to a large extent the problem of local self-
government."¹³

In the New South Garden City as realized in North Charleston, administrative
control rested with the developers who financed the project. Decisions concerning the
direction of development were controlled by the promoters who created the city, and
little thought was given to long term governance. The issues at hand were related to
economic development rather than administration. Though the Marquis plan provided
considerable space for public buildings fronting on the central plazas, the rapidity with
which this part of the plan was abandoned suggests that control of the affairs of the new
city by its residents was not an issue which was given much consideration by Rhett and
his associates.

Thus the New South Garden City was distinctly separated along lines of class
and race, the separation of which was intended to provide a measure of control over the
less privileged elements of Southern society. Moreover, it was to be dominated by

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private interests rather than communal interests, and ownership of land and control of
development was to be in the hands of the New South progressive capitalists who
created the city. This represents the clearest distinction between Howard's vision of a
new urban future and that of New South boosters seeking a model that would bind
together the city and the country and bring prosperity to the American South.

In terms of size, population, form, and function, the New South Garden City as
realized in the plans for North Charleston was strongly linked to Ebenezer Howard's
Garden City. It is with structure that the New South model deviated substantially from
Howard's vision. The communal aspects of Howard's Garden City, its egalitarian
instincts, and its emphasis on control by the residents, found infertile soil in the
American South of the Progressive Era. However, the fundamental ideal of creating a
new urban form that combined the city and country is clearly revealed in the plans for
the first New South Garden City of North Charleston.

The question then becomes, were there other planned cities that drew on the
model of the Garden City, in combination with a City Beautiful aesthetic, yet filtered
through the social and economic structures of the American South during the first
decades of the twentieth century? Moreover, if there were such planned cities, can the
traces of the first New South Garden City of North Charleston be discerned in the
landscape? In fact, there were several planned cities in the South based in varying
degrees on the New South Garden City model, including Kingsport, Tennessee. Farm
City, North Carolina. Clewiston, Florida, and Chicopee, Georgia. These planned cities
will be examined in turn to gain a better understanding of the creation of the New South
Garden City, to search for influences of Howard and Robinson in their planning, and to

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place in context a dynamic and neglected urban planning tradition that emerged in the
American South during the early decades of the last century.

Searching for North Charleston

In 1917, the Committee on Town Planning of the American Institute of
Architects compiled and published *City Planning Progress in the United States*. The
plan for North Charleston was not mentioned in the compendium, though discussions of
numerous other planned new towns were included.²⁴ Twenty years later, in 1939, the
Urbanism Committee of the National Resource Committee of the United States
government published *Urban Planning and Land Policies*, in which one section was
entitled “Planned Communities.” This study, completed as part of New Deal efforts to
revitalize the American economy, represents in all likelihood the most detailed study of
planned communities ever undertaken in the United States. The study included detailed
discussions taken from 144 planned communities, and lists an addition 53 communities
that were not included in the study but were, in fact, planned communities. Again,
North Charleston was not mentioned in this study.²⁵

In fact, in no histories of planning does the city of North Charleston receive a
mention. Why was this large scale development, so clearly an application of
Progressive Era planning principles as embodied in the Garden City and the City
Beautiful, forgotten? The answer rests in a combination of the planner and the situation
of North Charleston, which in a sense conspired to push the first planned New South
Garden City into obscurity.

William Bell Marquis was an excellent planner. He served with distinction in
the United States Army in World War I, planning cantonments and hospitals as part of
the war effort. After the war, he worked for Olmsted Brothers, later Olmsted Associates, rising to the level of partner with the firm. While with the Olmsted firm Marquis worked on a variety of projects, including residential subdivisions, golf courses such as Augusta National, and residential estates. He was a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and became a Fellow in 1936. Marquis is considered a pioneer of landscape architecture. He did not, however, engage in extensive writing for professional or lay publications concerning his plans, as was done by several other planners, including Olmsted and John Nolen. Further confounding knowledge of the plan for North Charleston was the fact that the P.J. Berckmans Company closed its doors around 1917 in a bitter family dispute, and its collection of plans and files was apparently unceremoniously destroyed. Thus any architectural renderings, details, or documents held by the Berckmans Company were lost. Moreover, when the companies developing North Charleston went into foreclosure in the early 1930s, tremendous amounts of material were cleared out from offices for which rent was no longer being paid.

As to situation, the plans for North Charleston were not widely publicized outside of the local media. After the plans were first announced in 1912, there was little effort to generate excitement outside the local area. Why Rhett and his associates, after envisioning and investing so much, failed to trumpet their plans across the South if not further, is a mystery. It may well be that during the critical 1914 to 1918 period, in which the groundwork for the ambitious project was being laid, Rhett was deeply involved in establishing the United States Chamber of Commerce, first as vice president and then as president. There was no other partner in the North Charleston enterprise
with Rhett’s stature and vision who could draw attention to the planned city. The deafening silence that greeted North Charleston’s creation was deepened after 1920, when the South Carolina lowcountry slipped into the economic downturn that was to essentially last until World War II.

Thus, North Charleston as a planned city which sought to draw together the agricultural and industrial sectors in a new urban form, a New South Garden City, did not so much disappear from the national urban planning consciousness as never become inscribed in the planning pantheon as did Gary, Fairfield, Forest Hills, and numerous other communities. The question is, did this first New South Garden City have any effect on subsequent efforts to plan and build similar cities in the New South? The key to answering this question lies in exploring the connection between one of America’s premier town planner during the first decades of the twentieth century, John Nolen, and the South Carolina lowcountry.

John Nolen was a pivotal figure in the development of city and town planning during the Progressive Era, and was a forceful advocate for the emerging profession. He wrote eloquently and extensively in a variety of mediums, including short articles in professional magazines such as *American City* and *National Municipal Review* as well as several book-length treatises on planning, including *New Ideals in the Planning of Cities, Towns and Villages* in 1919 and *New Towns for Old* in 1927. He also gave hundreds of public lectures during the course of his career, traveling with a formidable set of lantern slides showing examples of sound planning which he believed could be applied to any community interested in improvement.

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Nolen’s professional planning career extended from 1904, while still a student at Harvard, to his death in 1937. His first commissions were in the South, including Charlotte, where he served as an advisor to the Park and Tree Commission, and Savannah where he replanned a large downtown park. Though his firm was located in Cambridge, he was very active in planning in the South throughout his career. His later work in the South ran the gamut of planning activities, including the sprawling elite residential suburb of Myers Park outside Charlotte in 1911, a plan for the new city of Venice, Florida in 1916, and a comprehensive plan for Spartanburg, South Carolina in 1922. Nolen was also active outside of the South, with some of his most important work including a comprehensive plan for San Diego in 1907 and the planned city of Mariemont, Ohio in 1921.

Nolen never completed a plan in the South Carolina lowcountry, though it was not for lack of interest on his part. Nolen was not only an excellent landscape architect and town planner but also an astute businessman. He was constantly in search of new opportunities, contacting local authorities and offering his services. On trips not directly related to a project to a new city he was likely to take notes concerning the local situation, as he did in Charleston. In April 1913 Nolen typed up some notes concerning Charleston which in all likelihood resulted from a visit he made to the South Carolina lowcountry. These notes are in a brief outline form which may have been intended by Nolen to be the basic structure of a plan for Charleston. The topics included “Waterfront,” “Street System,” “Public Buildings,” “City Extension,” with a note underneath stating “present tendencies unfortunate,” “Private Places,”
"Recommendations," and "Agitation towards City Plan." The notes under "Private Places" include the headings "New Places" and "New Suburbs."\textsuperscript{16}

Clearly, Nolen was aware of new developments in Charleston in April 1913. The scope of the plans for North Charleston was first revealed in the local newspaper in May 1913, but undoubtedly if Nolen had contact with Charleston's business leaders, then he would have gotten wind of the huge development taking shape on Charleston's Neck. By 1913, then, the plans for the first New South Garden City were likely known to one of America's leading city planners.

Nolen, or someone in his office, began drafting an analysis of Charleston's port operation in 1915, utilizing his notes from the 1913 visit. The 1913 notes concerning Charleston begin with the statement "Compare with Manhattan Island," and the unsigned plan from Nolen's office begins "Charleston is situated on Charleston Bay, at the confluence of the Cooper and Ashley Rivers, about 7\frac{1}{2} miles from the ocean. In several ways, the situation of Charleston resembles that of New York City..."\textsuperscript{17} This 13-page document shows considerable knowledge of the workings of Charleston's waterfront and some understanding of the developments on the Neck, noting that "On the Cooper River... beyond the city limits, the major portion of the frontage is owned by the United States and is used for the navy yard or is a part of the naval reservation. Above the navy yard, several industrial plants have recently been established on the river front."\textsuperscript{18}

In 1915, then, Nolen had knowledge of the workings of the lowcountry economy and developments on Charleston's Neck. Did he, however, have specific knowledge of the plan for the new city of North Charleston? The answer is yes, as shown by the
presence of the "bird’s eye view" of North Charleston, produced in 1915, in his files. How Nolen received a copy of this plan is unclear, and though the drawing itself does not reveal the total scope of the ambitious plans for the first New South Garden City, undoubtedly Nolen’s interest in the development of North Charleston would have been piqued.\(^{19}\)

In addition, Nolen had other contacts with Charleston during the 1910s, including a proposal in 1918 from John F. Cox of the Charleston Heights Corporation. Cox wrote Nolen a hand written missive informing the famous planner that he had “bought a splendid tract of land near the Navy yard here for development, have platted it into 232 nice lots and formed a corporation to handle it as a reality proposition.” Cox added that “I find such a big demand for houses for high class mechanics employed here by the U.S. Gov’t that my project is developing into a building development.” Cox also informed Nolen that “We are located on the only highway out of the city, on a good elevation above the city, near the streetcar line, near the Navy Yard, have water and lights, good drainage, and many points of advantage for a high class subdivision.” Cox made his pitch to Nolen, writing that “I have been told that you are an expert in handling town site developments and I am writing you to know if you will take charge of ours and on what basis?”\(^{20}\) Nolen, mindful of his responsibilities as a planner during the war years, replied in September that “Your letter was mislaid. Otherwise I should have replied earlier. I regret to say that on account of Government work on which I am now engaged it is not possible for me to consider the suggestion with regards to the Charleston Heights Corporation.”\(^{21}\)
Though the project for Charleston Heights did not work out, Nolen's involvement with Charleston was not completed. In November 1920, Albert J. Stowe, the committee chairman or "secretary" of the Department of Publicity and Conventions of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce wrote to Nolen that "Practically all interests here in Charleston, are about ripe for the institution of a city planning campaign."

Stowe added that "to crystallize this sentiment, we are interested in having someone come here for a preliminary study of the situation, and are wondering if you might be able to undertake this about the middle of December. We plan to have a large well attended public forum, which we would want to have you address on the subject of city planning, particularly as it might effect Charleston; feeling that likely you would be able to inspire people here to an actual demand that this work be undertaken."

Stowe went on to note that "To accomplish best results, it would be highly advisable that you make a casual study of the situation a day or so in advance of the large meeting, and also meet with various of our special committees, which are directing energies along this line."

Stowe was confident that the prospects for developing a comprehensive plan for one of America's oldest cities would have in all likelihood captured Nolen's attention. He was quick to note, however, that "in extending to you this invitation to come to Charleston for this purpose, we can in no way commit ourselves or anyone else, to your ultimate retainment in making the final survey; that naturally comes within the province of the city planning commission after it has been appointed." Stowe added, however, that "The occasion... would give you a good chance to get in touch with the local powers who might eventually have that matter to decide."
By December 3, 1920, Nolen had not responded to Stowe's letter, so a follow-up telegram was sent that day. Nolen returned to his office on December 6 and promptly responded with a telegram of his own and a follow up letter. Though he was interested in coming to Charleston, he informed Stowe that “I already have one important engagement in western North Carolina, and the work for Spartanburg and Wilmington, N.C. is under consideration. It seems likely, however, that the work in the South will not develop immediately—that is, before Christmas. Travel is now expensive both in money and time, and it would be advantageous to all concerned to combine engagements at a distance. Therefore, if the local conditions in Charleston are such as to permit of postponement, it seems to me advisable.”

Not wanting to miss this rare opportunity, however, Nolen hastened to add that “On the other hand, if the work is really urgent, I shall be more than glad to see what I can do to cooperate with you.”

Nolen graciously concluded his letter by noting that “I have been in Charleston, and of course know something of its unique history and peculiar charm, both of which would contribute towards the interest and success of a city planning movement.”

Undoubtedly this previous visit was in 1913, at which time Nolen, with his eye always on an opportunity, had begun sketching out the preliminary basis for a city plan. Clearly this was a project to which he had given some thought.

After several weeks of letters sent back and forth scheduling Nolen’s visit to the South Carolina lowcountry, Nolen’s address was set for January 25, 1921. Charleston’s business elite was very interested in hearing from Nolen, even agreeing to reschedule the Chamber’s annual meeting, which Stowe had informed Nolen was “scheduled for Tuesday, January 18th.” At that time Stowe felt compelled to inform Nolen that “The
date of this cannot be altered, inasmuch as it is regularly provided for in our by-laws."28

The meeting date was not so unalterable as Stowe had stated, since the meeting was moved to the following week to accommodate Nolen’s hectic travel schedule.

With regards to Stowe’s request that he “inspire” local interest in planning, Nolen was characteristically demure. He informed Stowe that “I must leave to your judgment the question of whether I can ‘inspire’ your audience. I should not like to lay claim to that ability.” Not wanting to leave a mistaken impression, however, Nolen added that “I have been doing public speaking in connection with city planning for over a decade, and have spoken at many places before all sorts of audiences, small and large.” In terms of compensation, Nolen offered his standard terms for a visit such as this, which were “fifty dollars a day for time spent in Charleston or lost in traveling and hotel expenses.” Presumably to ensure that there would be no confusion with regards to fees, Nolen noted that “The cost of a similar visit to North Carolina earlier in the year was about two hundred and fifty dollars, and Charleston, I presume, would be slightly more than that sum, as the distance is greater.”29

With all of the details ironed out, Stowe was authorized by the Chamber “to arrange with you to be in Charleston during the two days of January 24th and 25th.”30

With an invitation officially extended, Stowe added that “We will arrange in advance of your coming, several committee meetings, and previous to these allow you ample opportunity to look over the ground with people well qualified to explain the situation to you here.”31 In a brief missive on January 3, 1921, Nolen responded “simply to confirm the engagement for my visit to Charleston…”32
Nolen's visit to Charleston was wrapped around several other stops in the South as part of his continuing efforts to generate new work as well as to complete ongoing projects in the region. Before coming to Charleston, Nolen planned to spend three days in Palm Beach, Florida, and after Charleston he was to go to Charlotte, where he was still working on Myers Park. During his negotiations with Stowe for the Charleston visit, Nolen was actively engaged in negotiating a visit to Spartanburg, which was also interested in discussing a comprehensive plan with America's premier town planner. Nolen slipped in a planned visit to Spartanburg on January 26 to speak on comprehensive planning to the Chamber of Commerce. Nolen's final stop before returning home was to be Baltimore, where the City Planning Institute was holding a meeting on January 29th.

Nolen's impending visit to Charleston received considerable attention in the local press. Under a "top of the page" headline on January 23, the News and Courier announced "City Planner to Visit This City." The report noted that "Great interest is getting underway in connection with a practical city planning movement started some time ago in Charleston and those giving the matter attention are anticipating a treat in the address here Tuesday night by Mr. John Nolen of Cambridge, Massachusetts on this subject." Anticipating public hesitation with regards to grandiose and impractical planning, the newspaper reassured its readers that Nolen "believes that city planning should be first along lines of efficiency and utility, rather than for aesthetic beauty alone." The newspaper report added that "The matter of mapping out industrial and commercial areas, residential subdivisions and such things will be treated in his address."
The arrangements for Nolen’s visit to Charleston were extensive. Stowe was out of town during the period of his visit, but arranged for other members of the Chamber, including the manager, to meet with him during his stay. Nolen arrived on Monday, January 24, early in the morning. Stowe had arranged for a four person committee to, in the words of the News and Courier, “remain with Mr. Nolen during his visit and have the responsibility of seeing that he comes in contact with all necessary sources of local information.” The newspaper added that “Members of that committee expect to show him the entire community by automobile.”

Stowe had also arranged for Nolen to address “a meeting of women, under the direction of their Federated Club... at which time you will doubtless be able to sketch over for them what a city plan is, and also say other things which will serve to tie up their interest in this movement.” In his Monday afternoon remarks to the women’s group, as reported in the local newspaper, Nolen “laid great stress on the beauty of the architecture of Charleston and declared that there was no reason for such planned along lines of its type ever being changed.” Nolen added, however, that “in the matter of growth residentially he felt that this would have to be across the Ashley River, as manufacturing zones seemed destined to cork the ‘bottleneck.’”

Stowe arranged for Nolen to spend that Monday evening in a private dinner meeting at the Chamber of Commerce. The guests included “the Mayor, newspaper editors, city engineer, port commissioners, park authorities, county engineer, school authorities, automobile club officers, and heads of the public utility company, and other from whom we presume you will be able to glean certain specific information that will be helpful to you in your address Tuesday evening.” As reported in the News and
*Courier*, this private session represented an opportunity for the planner “to become acquainted with prevailing local conditions.” The meeting also included “All members of the city planning committees of the Chamber, the Allied Engineer’s Association, the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. . . .” The goal of this meeting, as well as the tour of the Charleston area, was to enlighten Nolen “as to just what things it is most important that he become conversant with to properly discuss ‘The Charleston of Tomorrow’ before the membership meeting Tuesday evening.”

The capstone to Nolen’s visit to Charleston was his address to the annual meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. Prior to the meeting, the *News and Courier* reported anxiously that “Mr. John Nolen, known as an authority on the planning of city’s (sic) making them worth while for the future, probably knows a whole lot more than the average voter of Charleston—that is because it is his business to assimilate the good and the bad abut a city—and he will present his verdict to the membership meeting of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce. . . .” Nolen’s address to the Chamber was in all likelihood less a “verdict” than a statement on the need for sound city planning and the advantages planning could bring to the South Carolina lowcountry, since a verdict might have precluded future opportunities for the planner. As the *News and Courier* reported, “Mr. Nolen explained that city planning was simply a recognition of the sanitary, economic and aesthetic laws which should govern the original arrangement and subsequent rearrangement and development of a city.” Characteristic of Nolen, the *News and Courier* noted that “He carefully related the needs in the way of planning as he found them in this city and expressed the hope that the people would realize that if the city was to forge ahead as it should there was much

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to be done.” The obvious implication was that Nolen’s firm was best situated to answer those planning “needs.”

The Nolen visit, however, did not result in action in terms of comprehensive planning for Charleston. In submitting the bill for his trip to Stowe, Nolen noted that “The Charleston visit, so far as I was concerned, was very pleasant, and I trust worth while from the point of view of the Chamber of Commerce.” In a realistic assessment of the state of interest in planning in Charleston, Nolen added “I realize that the outlook for planning in a comprehensive way is not as bright as it is in some other places—and yet I think much could be done.” Suggestive of the more resistant elements to planning, Nolen wrote Stowe that “I do not believe that those who are interested primarily in the development of the harbor, with its docks and piers, are in any way opposed to the sort of planning which should accompany the further development of Charleston as a commercial port.” The same day that he wrote Stowe, Nolen sent follow-up letters to several prominent residents of the city, including Mayor John P. Grace, to let them know that he “enjoyed my visit to Charleston, and was much pleased at the opportunity to meet you and to hear about the plans for the active development of the city.” Nolen forwarded to the mayor a copy of his comprehensive plan for Erie, Pennsylvania, not only to remind him what a plan for Charleston might contain but also that if Charleston did not engage in planning it would be left behind by more progressive and forward thinking cities.

Stowe, in his response to Nolen, noted that “The conversations I have had since returning to Charleston... have indicated that you pleased the local people greatly.” In a statement that was as prescient as it was convoluted, Stowe informed Nolen that “we
both realize that the matter of developing local interest in a city plan, will be a somewhat tedious one, and consequently, it will be altogether pleasant during the work which we must have along this line in the future, for you to keep in touch with us on it."

The downturn in the South Carolina economy in 1921 effectively ended any city planning progress in Charleston. In October 1921, Nolen sent a letter to Stowe informing him that "This is the time to make up our autumn and winter schedule, and I am writing you especially because I have just made a contract to prepare a plan for Spartanburg, S.C. We shall be making journeys in that direction during the autumn and winter, and nothing would please us more than to include some planning for Charleston." With his eye always on planning opportunities, Nolen inquired "Could you write me briefly as to what progress has been made with the city planning program since my visit last February, and what the prospects are for the immediate future?" In a letter dated the same day to Mayor Grace, Nolen, probably hoping to engender a measure of competition between the lowcountry and upcountry, wrote that "We have just entered into a contract to prepare a general city plan for Spartanburg, S.C., and nothing would please me more than to have an opportunity to take up with you plans for the development of Charleston. I am wondering what progress has been made in this matter since last February." Neither letter received a reply.

Nevertheless, Nolen took away something from his trip to Charleston, including detailed knowledge of the development of the first New South Garden City of North Charleston. Two members of the four person committee which took Nolen "hither and thither about the city" were John O'Hear, president of the North Charleston
Development Company, and W.C. Wilbur, whose real estate company had been named exclusive sales representative for the project in 1917. O'Hear was involved with Nolen's visit because of his position as chairman of the Chamber's City Planning Committee while Wilbur was there as the chairman of the corresponding committee of the Kiwanis Club. Undoubtedly, however, these men took Nolen to the developing city of North Charleston as part of a tour of Charleston and its hinterland. Nolen would have in all likelihood been extraordinarily interested in the details of the plans for the sprawling city, as well as the plan for Charleston Farms. He would have been keenly interested in the progress of the development of which he had first gotten wind in 1913 on his previous visit Charleston, and of which he had acquired a bird’s eye view of the planned city. That the development of the ambitious project had not proceeded as planned probably made a distinct impression on America's premier town planner. Still, he would have been impressed at the scale of the project and its effort to draw together the agricultural base with the urban industrial sector of the New South.

Thus, in searching for the influence of North Charleston upon the larger stream of planning thought, the professional career of John Nolen provides a compelling link. Nolen had visited the South Carolina lowcountry in 1913, when the plans for North Charleston were coming to light, and in Nolen’s work after 1913, particularly at Kingsport, the influence of the first New South Garden City may be detected. His knowledge of the planned city was reinforced by his visit to Charleston in 1921, which is clearly reflected in his town plans for two additional New South Garden Cities, Farm City and Clewiston. The New South Garden City can also be seen in the plans for Chicopee by Nolen’s longtime associate Earle Draper. In all of these plans the model of
the New South Garden City, characterized by its size, population, form, function, and control, appears in varying but clearly detectable degrees. Though the model may have been altered to meet local circumstances, it is clear that Nolen carried the New South Garden City that he had first encountered at North Charleston beyond the bounds of the South Carolina lowcountry, making it a part of America's dynamic urban landscape.

“A City Built to Order”

In December 1915, John Nolen was contacted by J. H. Sears of Appleton and Company, an investment firm in New York City, on behalf of a friend who was interested in developing property along the rail line of the Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railway, which ran from Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Elkhorn City, Kentucky. The line connected the coal fields of Kentucky and western Virginia with the South Carolina upcountry and its many textile mills. There were no large cities in the area, and Sears informed Nolen that “My friend is interested in the Clinchfield Railroad and along the line of the road is working on the development of towns. He wants to talk to somebody in regard to certain details in town planning.”

Sears’ friend was H.R. Dennis, a vice president of the Securities Company of New York City. Suggestive of Dennis’ keen interest in developing a town along the rail line as well as Nolen’s eagerness to secure new business in the South was the fact that the two held their first meeting in New York City on New Year’s Day. After the meeting, Nolen, as was his practice, quickly wrote Dennis to inform him that “I have reflected on the very interesting statement that you made on New Years Day of the problems connected with the physical development of Kingsport.” Dennis and his associates had used railroad engineers to draw a plan for a new town which they found

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unsatisfactory, and to which Nolen referred, noting that “I have also re-examined the
survey of the property... and the blue print of the preliminary plans for the subdivision
of the first section of the town. The whole thing presents a very interesting situation
that is full of possibilities for the application of the best planning principles.” Nolen felt
compelled to add that “It seems to me that there is now sufficient experience and basis
for planning with confidence for the future.”53 The “confidence” Nolen referred to may
have been based, at least in some small measure, on his observations and understanding
of the ambitious plans for the first New South Garden City of North Charleston.

“The whole thing” referred to by Nolen in his letter to Dennis was the plan for a
fully functioning city in an agricultural region of eastern Tennessee (Figure 6.1). As
Nolen wrote ten years after planning began for Kingsport, in a chapter entitled “An
Industrial City Built to Order” in his book New Towns for Old,

The story of it all reads like a romance. In its origin Kingsport was much the
sort of town that, early in the eighteen nineties, often came into being in western
Canada, when the great railway undertakings were pushing their way along the
prairies and over mountain ranges, across the continent and up into the north.
The [Clinchfield] railroad... [ran] through a region in southeastern Tennessee
where population was sparse and construction was costly even for that day.
Fortunately the country was replete with natural wealth: coal, timber, a great
variety of minerals, including sand, clay, limestone, silica, feldspar and kaolin,
and other desirable raw materials. There was an excellent water-supply. it was
a good agricultural country, though little developed.54

Nolen, writing in the organ of the Garden City movement the Town Planning
Review thirty years after the initial planning for Kingsport, noted that “The city was
conceived and built for the sake of making business for this railroad. However, it could
have made no business of importance had not the opportunity which existed been taken
hold of by an energetic group, inspired with constructive imagination.”55 Nolen added

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that "Those in charge conceived early the idea that the growth of the community ought to be carefully prepared for. The services of an engineer, a town planner and an architect were promptly engaged."56 Noting the group’s initial efforts at planning the new town, Nolen carefully wrote that "An earlier town layout prepared by the railroad’s engineers was revised and extended into a more adequate scheme, and the result was a well co-ordinated and comprehensive town plan which gave due regard to industrial, economic, sanitary, civic, agricultural and aesthetic elements."57 Nolen felt obliged to inform the readers of the Review, however, that "This town plan... was primarily a business proposition undertaken with a far-sighted regard to ultimate profitable financial returns."58
In fact, while planning Kingsport Nolen never used the phrases Garden City or City Beautiful in his correspondence with the developers of the city or in his initial writings concerning Kingsport. The reason for this may rest in the notion held by the pragmatic New York businessmen promoting the project that Howard and Robinson, as the visionaries of the two movements, were impractical or utopian dreamers. In his article in the *Town Planning Review*, however, Nolen sought to position the plan for Kingsport within the Garden City movement. He wrote that “American achievement in town and city planning and re-planning, in the sense that those terms are used on the Continent of Europe, or the laying-out and construction of garden cities and garden suburbs and the making of regional plans, as the English town planners conceive them, is as yet unimportant.” Nolen continued, however, to claim that “The garden city and garden suburb movement in Great Britain and on the continent... are being observed by American planners and studied with a view to similar developments in the United States.” Nolen noted the core of the problem of employing these ideas in the United States, writing that “if European practice is to be of value, we must know how to modify and adapt it to fit American life and American requirements. In climate, topography, habits of work and recreation, in traditions from the past and expectations for the future,—in all of these America is different from Europe.”

Nolen held up Kingsport as a model of an industrial community of the Garden City variety, adapted for the special conditions of America. Kingsport was in fact designed along the lines of the Garden City variant that first appeared in the South Carolina lowcountry. Though there was no large city nearby to provide the symbiotic relationship of Charleston and North Charleston, in terms of size, population, form.
function, and control Kingsport was clearly in the model of the New South Garden City, and in fact represents a tremendous though not unqualified success in terms of creating a new urban future for the New South.

According to the 1939 National Resources Committee report on new towns, the original townsite of Kingsport covered around 1,100 acres, roughly equivalent to the size of North Charleston. Around 260 acres were reserved for industrial uses, and an additional 110 acres were set aside for commercial and business uses. The industrial acreage reserved represents around 24 percent of the townsite, which is roughly in line with the 17 percent of the total acreage set aside at North Charleston for industry. In terms of commercial space, however, the plan for Kingsport allotted considerably more acreage, roughly ten percent of the townsite, to business and retail. As noted in the Committee report, “The business district provided in Kingsport was exceptionally large. . . . At the present time, only about 23 percent of the allotted area is occupied by business, varying from temporary structures to those originally built.”

Thus, the scale of development of Kingsport was clearly in line with the New South Garden City model. It was not intended to be a company town or mill village, but a fully functioning city, with large industrial and commercial spaces. The balance of the townsite was given over to residential acreage as well as streets, parks, plazas, schools, and churches.

Nolen’s initial plan for Kingsport provided for 1,575 residential lots, which would have yielded an estimated population of between 6,000 and 8,000 persons. Early extensions of the plan by the developers increased the projected population of Kingsport to between 10,000 and 12,000 persons. This is somewhat below the estimated
population for North Charleston, but further extensions of the Kingsport plan would add to this population, placing it in line with the plan for the new city on the Neck.

Thus, in terms of size and population, Kingsport deviates only negligibly from the model of the Garden City as put forward by Howard as well as the model of the New South Garden City as articulated at North Charleston. The area around Kingsport provided tremendous population growth opportunities, however, and by 1939 the entire urban area was significantly larger than the original 1,100 acres. and the population was estimated to be 22,000, with an additional 5,000 persons living just outside the city. The original plan may have projected a population somewhat less than Howard had recommended for a Garden City, but the rapid growth of Kingsport brought it close to his ideal population of 30,000, and the scale of both city and surrounding area approached his preferred 6,000 acres. The size and population of Kingsport, then, approximate Howard’s model, altered somewhat to meet local conditions, positioning the planning for the city in the emerging tradition of the New South Garden City.

As to form, Kingsport was clearly designed by a professional planner drawing on the ideals of Progressive Era planning principles taken from the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements. The actual site of Kingsport made planning a new city a challenge, as acknowledged by Nolen when he wrote Dennis after his first visit in early February 1916 that “Although I find already that the topographical difficulties are going to be somewhat unusual, I shall prepare the general plan at the rate of three dollars per acre,” which was Nolen’s standard rate. A week later, Nolen further expounded on the challenging site, writing Dennis that “The topography is so irregular that every piece of it is related to almost every other piece. The problem of the best possible street and
The topographical difficulties faced by Nolen, and his solution to them, was summarized in the National Resources Committee report: "The topography north of the business district rises rapidly to a ridge which marks the boundary of the residential area, and then drops abruptly to the north and east. The street system has, in general, recognized the peculiarities of the site in a formalized manner. Radial streets terminating at the Civic Center serve the northern portion of the city, while additional radials serve the eastern section. The disposition of the business center and the residential section to the north was dictated largely by the topography, which has prevented an even distribution of the residential district about the center and resulted in two distinct types of street layout, which have produced a number of unfortunate relationships of streets and blocks."  

Given the difficulties of the site, Nolen produced an admirable plan which has stood the test of time, though not without some reservations. Nolen began by separating out the industrial districts, and then began re-planning the downtown business section. In many ways, the challenges facing Nolen were similar to those facing Marquis, with a site split between an eastern and western section, with industrial uses located along the rail lines running next to the Holston River. The eastern portion of the site was less formalistically designed than was the western half, which included what eventually became known as the Civic Center.

Nolen’s initial plan for Kingsport provided for 1,575 residential lots. The average lot size was 7,500 square feet, which corresponds to North Charleston’s average lot size of around 7,150 square feet. North Charleston’s projected population was considerably higher because of the large number of lots in the new city, many of
them measuring a paltry 3,750 square feet. Kingsport’s morphology, however, did not include a development such as North Charleston’s Pinewood Park, with lot sizes approaching a half an acre fronting on a circular park.

In planning Kingsport, Nolen employed a feature taken directly from Howard’s Garden City, though not in terms of scale. On the northern edge of the new city, along the ridge line, Nolen designed a linear park that was dedicated open space and was intended to function as a greenbelt. Though it was apparently not intended to incorporate agricultural uses, it represents one of the first attempts to create a buffer between the city and the country. The greenbelt was truncated, however, and did not fully encircle the new city. The plan intended for the city to be buffered from the east by a sprawling golf course. Kingsport was designed to be a stand alone city, surrounded and buffered on three sides by open space, which was clearly an improvement over the plan for North Charleston and an improvement in the New South Garden City model.

The most auspicious part of the plan springs largely from Nolen’s design for the downtown business section. In terms of the morphology of the downtown section, the plan was clearly inspired by the principles of the City Beautiful movement. When Nolen was brought on board in 1916, the downtown area had already been planned, though as Nolen wrote, “Fortunately the community was still in its early stages; the revision and extension of inadequate scheme prepared by the railroad’s engineers proved easily practicable to a degree that gave the town a new and substantial basis for intelligent growth.” Planning for the downtown area took considerable effort, which was not completely supported by Kingsport’s developers, probably due to the cost.
involved. As Dennis wrote Nolen early in 1916, with the planning process just getting underway, “I spoke at first of having two plans, one an ideal plan and the second a plan fitting in with the plan which has already been developed for the portion of the town laid out. On second thought I think the latter plan is all that is necessary.” Dennis, wanting to make sure that Nolen clearly understood what he was writing, added, “In other words, fitting the new five hundred acres to the old plan with such revisals of the old plan as can readily be made.”66 It was this decision that led to many of the design flaws of the “city built to order.”

Nolen, in planning the Civic Center, felt that it needed extensive re-planning, taking into account the principles of Progressive Era planning which the railroad engineers had failed to employ. As he wrote Dennis in April 1916. “It seems to me now, after careful consideration of the matter, that the most satisfactory and fairest way of charging for the Town Site Section it to put it on the same basis as the Outlying Section. . . . The acres are practically the same,—500 acres each—and while the amount of work required and its difficulty, and the extent of numerous revisions, are much greater in the case of the Town Site, I am willing under the circumstances of the total contract and my interest in the Kingsport City Plan to accept this arrangement.”67

Seeking to quell the developers objections before they were placed, Nolen quickly added that “It seems pretty certain, too, that the replanned Town Site will not only be much better in general for its purposes, which are fundamentally important to Kingsport, but as a matter of real estate sales the new plan ought to yield, even at the most conservative estimate, at least $100,000 more profit than the original plan, the shortcomings of which now appear clear.”68

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The plan for the Civic Center was not completed until July 1919 (Figure 6.2). In 1916, as Nolen struggled with replanning the downtown section, he listed for the impatient developers the advantages of the plan on which he was working: "Circulation good. . . . Frontage increased and number of lots increased. . . . Wider streets. . . . 20 foot alleys. . . . Arrangement economical, practical and orderly. . . . Ample provision for expansion."69 This report to Dennis and his partners was meant to assure them that Nolen's work would eventually pay off financially, with more commercial property with better access and amenities available for sale.

The actual plan for the Civic Center bears some striking similarities to the Marquis plan for North Charleston. Both plans were firmly situated in the Progressive Era, with planning principles drawn from the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements. The Nolen plan for downtown Kingsport, however, is more elegant than the Marquis plan for the Montague Avenue corridor plan for North Charleston, forming a more cohesive whole. The morphology of Kingsport's Civic Center is based on the relationship between the railway station and the circular feature from which the six main avenues radiate. The two features are linked by a wide, landscaped boulevard appropriately named Broad Street. Broad Street is bisected by Center Street, which forms the central intersection of the Civic Center. On both the northeast and northwest quadrants of this intersection Nolen planned two large plazas, designed exactly the same as the North Charleston plazas planned by Marquis. As in the Marquis plan, Nolen envisioned large public buildings surrounding these plazas, including a post office, the courthouse, City Hall, and a theater. The space between the plazas and the
circular feature was planned for the city's premier hotel as well as a library and the police station.
Unlike North Charleston, then, public functions were specifically placed into the fabric of the plan. In addition, at the behest of the developers, sacred spaces were reserved in the Nolen plan for Kingsport. In one of it more interesting features, four of the interstices of the avenues radiating outward from the central circle were planned for churches of the various leading denominations, including Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

Nolen's main objective in planning the Civic Center was preserving the integrity of the central district and situating public functions around the central plazas, creating a cohesive district that would stand the test of time. When Nolen delivered the plan in July 1919, he warned Dennis that "In discussing the civic buildings it is important, in my opinion, to keep this whole down town district in mind and in view. It is really a single unit, extending from the railroad station to the buildings at the head of Broad Street beyond Sullivan, and from Clay to Cherokee." The Civic Center would provide the focus for civic life in the new city, binding the community together in a planned district that incorporated public, commercial, and spiritual functions in a park like setting.

Though Nolen may not have drawn directly from the plan for North Charleston for the Civic Center, there are striking similarities with the Marquis plan. In North Charleston, Montague Avenue connects the waterfront with the circular park, with two large plazas facing each other across the street, surrounded by public buildings. The circular feature at Kingsport is highly reminiscent of Park Circle, with the distinction at Kingsport that the space surrounding the circle was given over to religious activities rather than the contemplative park space envisioned in the Marquis plan. In addition, in
the Kingsport plan, the interior blocks of the downtown commercial area south of Center Street are cut by a series of alleys, much like the blocks abutting Montague Avenue.

In addition to the downtown district, another issue which arose early in the planning process as the cities morphology was being determined was separation of land uses into districts and the property restricted through covenants. As Nolen wrote in 1927, "One of the first steps taken for the development of the site was the division of the new city into well-recognized zones for the several forms of use. This was done according to the enlightened modern practice now recognized by recent legislation.... Areas were thus allotted respectively to factories and industrial plants, to wholesale trade, to retail trade, to residences, and to public buildings, schools, parks and playgrounds."70

Though Nolen, in later trumpeting his accomplishments at Kingsport, made it sound as if the zoning and land use restrictions were immediately put into place as they were at North Charleston, but at Kingsport that was not the case. Nolen wrote Dennis in April 1916 that "I enclose herewith two copies of the proposed restrictions for different building districts in Kingsport, defining use, height, area, building lines, etc. I have put in definite figures in all cases, although I realize that some of them will probably need to be changed after you... have given them further consideration." Nolen added that "These are merely my suggestions."71

For the developers, the zone plan and the restrictions were tied together, and Nolen appeared reluctant to complete work on the zoning plan and to assist with the implementation of restrictions. As he wrote Dennis two year into the planning process,
"With regard to restrictions, I should like to give the matter further thought than I have been able to give thus far. It seems to me there are three important things to do. One is to secure the adoption of a suitable building code by the town authorities. Another is the division of the town into zones, either by some public enactment or through the deeds of the property. And finally, the drafting of the restrictions for use in the deeds, covering not only the transfer, but in some cases maintenance as well."\(^\text{72}\)

A year later, in October 1919, Dennis forwarded to Nolen for comment a copy of the "list of current restrictions on Kingsport properties,"\(^\text{73}\) which for the most part consisted of minimum house values, ranging from $1,500 for the least desirable areas to $3,500 for the most desirable. Dennis added that "I believe the time has come when we can go into this matter very thoroughly, and I will be very pleased if you will draw up a list of restrictions which seem to you applicable."\(^\text{74}\) Nolen, in responding to Dennis' letter, noted that "I am somewhat in doubt as to what advice to give you for Kingsport as to 'Restrictions' for two reasons. First, because the restrictions to be placed in deeds in the transfer of property depend to some extent upon the decision as to whether a zone plan is to be worked out and adopted for Kingsport or not. If there is to be a zone plan some of the restrictions and regulations can be provided better in the zone plan than in the restrictions in deeds."\(^\text{75}\) Nolen, in a professional snit because the Kingsport developers had refused to authorize a trip to the site since 1917,\(^\text{76}\) further noted in a stunning statement that "The second reason is that a complete and thoroughgoing scheme of restrictions or zoning should be based on more definite and complete study and planning of Kingsport than has yet been made."\(^\text{77}\) Nolen felt compelled to add that "It makes little difference what one starts to consider in the way of plans for the
Kingsport work, we come up sooner or later upon the fact that there is not general accepted city plan upon which other planning can be based.”

This was an amazing statement, considering that by this point Nolen had been hard at work planning Kingsport for nearly four years. There was a generally accepted plan which established a commercial core, an industrial sector largely situated towards the Holston River, and surrounding residential sections of varying quality. That Kingsport was not cleanly separated into “divisions,” as was North Charleston, does not alter this key component of the New South Garden City, though it does call into question Nolen’s relationship with the city’s developers. By March 1920, Nolen had produced a “tentative zone plan and statement for Kingsport” which included use restrictions on the various zones. It had taken four years, but later, after the dust of the planning process had settled, Nolen wrote in New Towns for Old that in terms of separation of land uses, “Industrial developments and housing accommodations were the two main factors. The manufacturing plants thus far located occupy districts where they cause the least annoyance for the public, while securing the maximum efficiency both as regards transit accommodations and availability to the homes of workers.” The goal that Nolen had tried to accomplish was simple enough, given the length of time it took to produce the plan, to ensure that “The residential tracts are kept away from the smoke, dust, noise and danger of the industrial tracts.”

Whether or not Nolen drew directly on the plan for North Charleston for the Civic Center, for the zone plan and restrictions, or for any other aspect of the plan for Kingsport is not as important as the realization that both plans were cut from similar cloth. The morphology of Kingsport clearly positions it in the planning traditions of the
Garden City and the City Beautiful that were so integral to Progressive Era thought. The design by a professional planner, the street layout which approximated a radial pattern, a civic center which included grand public spaces and a well-defined focus, and a division of uses and the implementation of property restrictions were all part of the planning traditions of the time. All of these morphological traits indicate that Nolen was planning a New South Garden City in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, extending and modifying the model first created in the South Carolina lowcountry.

As to function, Kingsport was consciously designed as a fully functioning city. The scale of the industrial space in the new city as well as the commercial district in the Civic Center clearly separates Kingsport from a company town or a factory village. The readily available natural resources in the area drew a tremendous diversity of industry, linked to other industrial operations by the excellent rail connections.

Industrial development came quickly to Kingsport. As Nolen wrote of the new city, “Important industries immediately began to establish themselves here, attracted by the favorable conditions. First came a producer of Portland cement, building up very speedily an extensive business. Others followed, alive to the value of the clay fields and other sources of raw materials.”81 Other early industries included Kingsport Brick Corporation, Kingsport Pulp Corporation, the Federal Dyestuff and Chemical Company, the Kingsport Press, and the sprawling Borden Mills textile operation, all established between 1910 and 1925. Thus, in terms of industrial activity, Kingsport was clearly established as a new South Garden City, with a wide range of industrial opportunities that would have made Rhett and his associates envious.
The functionality of a New South Garden City that escaped the eye of the developers and planner, however, was the agricultural sector. Kingsport was situated in an agricultural area that was, in Nolen’s words, “little developed,” which, “though hardly a wilderness, was an out-of-the-way agricultural region, remote from the world’s activities.” It appears that the Kingsport developers were fairly certain that an agricultural sector would emerge as demand for products grew with the new city. Indicative of this was the growth of the agricultural sector prior to the founding of the city, which Nolen alludes to when he wrote that “The little agricultural community that with the coming of the railroad had sprung up indicated that Kingsport was the proper site for this town.” Nolen and the developers were assured that “It was good agricultural country, though little developed.” and that Kingsport would draw farmers to the area to provide food and other products for the new city. The agricultural sector, however, never fully developed as envisioned, overshadowed as it was by the burgeoning opportunities offered by the influx of industry.

In terms of functionality, then, Kingsport was a complete city, with a residential, commercial, and industrial sector as well as a hinterland from which to draw natural resources for transformation as well as agricultural products. Clearly, Kingsport was not planned to be a factory city such as Pullman, Gary, or Fairfield but something very different. With its large industrial base, Kingsport represents the first realization of the ideal of the New South Garden City as envisioned by Rhett and his associates. The rapid growth of industry and the new city’s population during the late 1910s and early 1920s would have been something of which Rhett, and most other urban progressive businessmen in the New South tradition could only have dreamed.

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The control of Kingsport follows closely the model of the New South Garden City first articulated at North Charleston. In terms of class, race, ownership, and governance Kingsport was structured not around the communitarian principles of Howard's Garden City but the economic structures associated with urban business progressives in the New South. A distinctive feature of Kingsport was that the controlling interests were not local to the South but from outside, specifically New York. The resulting structure, however, was essentially the same, with the developers of Kingsport fitting easily into the economic traditions of the New South as evidenced by the city that they created.

The class structure of Kingsport was defined by quality of housing and place of residence, much as was planned for North Charleston. As Nolen wrote in 1927, "The administration of housing activities by the Improvement Corporation has produced results that make Kingsport in the quiet beauty and charm of its residence sections, compare favorably with some of the celebrated model communities in England." A major difference between Kingsport and North Charleston was that the developers employed a renowned architect to design the first houses in the new city, creating an elite, well designed early residential district. As Nolen wrote, "Mr. Clinton Mackenzie, the architect, has made his work seem a natural outgrowth of the plan."

Nolen noted the differences in class for residential properties of Kingsport, writing in 1927 that "The dwellings range in size from three to eight rooms. A six-room house is rented at twenty-five dollars a month. A man may buy his home for a moderate cash payment, with subsequent installments through a period of fifteen years. The Improvement Corporation sells the houses at cost, plus six per cent. The prevailing
price for years was in the neighborhood of twenty-five hundred dollars. The purchaser gets a finished house with tastefully planted grounds. A trained woman landscape gardener gives all her time to the planting of shrubs and trees.”87 Chances were, however, that some neighborhoods received considerably more attention from the landscape gardener that did others. As Nolen wrote, “The highest-grade houses, designed for the higher-salaried employees, cost between nine and ten thousand dollars.”88 Class distinctions based on residential use, then, were clearly evident in Kingsport’s plan, as noted by an architectural critic of the 1920s, writing that “The range of house types is very great, as is the variety and freedom of architectural style. There are several types of small cottages, even three room bungalows, and from them all the way to the pretentious two-story, porched house, with six good rooms. . .”89

There were differences in class structure between Kingsport and North Charleston, including the absence of an elite residential area such as Pinewood Park. This may have been based on the fact that Kingsport was not in close proximity to an existing area, from which it was thought an elite population might relocate. Conversely, Nolen could have easily observed the failure of Pinewood Park to generate much attention from Charleston’s elite, and convinced the developers that a residential area with lots approaching half an acre would make no sense in the new city of Kingsport.

Like North Charleston, however, class structure of residential areas was to be controlled by the restrictive covenants put in place by the developers. In 1918, the developers completed one of the first residential areas, and began looking for a mechanism to protect the neighborhood from untoward elements. As Dennis wrote Nolen in June 1918,
We have now practically finished the building of fifty-eight houses on the land just north of Sullivan Street. . . . The houses are built of hollow tile construction and stucco, with a little wood work. They are rather Old English in design. Most of them are single houses, but there are some two and three family houses mixed in. They are six room houses, and taking into consideration the planning, light, macadam street, water and sewerage, they represent a cost of about $2.300 to $2.500 a piece. Each house has a bathroom and linen closet; generally speaking they have three bedrooms. . . . We expect to be able to sell a good many of these houses, but before we place them on the market we wish you would prepare a set of restrictions covering the sale of houses and lots. We have created a real beauty spot in Kingsport and we would like it as such.90

Nolen was noncommittal when it came to developing property restrictions and the zoning plan. In 1920 he finally delivered restrictions to the developers, four years after beginning the planning for Kingsport. In terms of residential districts, Nolen proposed two different districts, which he called “Residential A” and “Residential B.” The restrictions as conceived by Nolen were neither complete nor extensive. For Residential A, Nolen wrote that “This district should be restricted to single family houses on ample lots of at least 6000 square feet of area. The houses should not be allowed to cover more than 30% of the lot area or to cost less than $[amount unspecified]. A set back of at least 20 feet from the street line and 10 feet from side and rear lines should be required. The maximum height should not be over 3 stories.” Nolen went on the note that “Churches, schools and clubhouses should be allowed within this district subject to special permission and restrictions as to height, area etc.” Nolen further noted that “All business should be excluded from this district except that private offices should be allowed in a residence. . . .” The only major difference for Residential B, as stated by Nolen, was that “There would be allowed in addition to the single family detached dwellings, semi-detached and two-family houses, also group houses of not over 8 units in a row. . . .”91
Though the restrictions were clearly not as complete as that put forward at North Charleston, Kingsport was to be structured by class based on residential areas protected by restrictive covenants. Given the developers' desire to turn a profit and protect their investment, this makes perfect sense. The communitarian and egalitarian principles put forward by Howard had no place in the plan for Kingsport, or other New South Garden Cities. Nolen, however, appeared reluctant to put forward covenants and a zone plan for the new city, which in the developers' mind were of paramount importance for the long term viability of the new city. It is unclear whether Nolen felt some desire to prevent the erection of class barriers in the new city, or simply did not feel comfortable writing restrictive covenants as the developers asked. It is unlikely that Nolen believed that some sort of classless paradise would emerge in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, though he may have felt that to create a true city there needed to be a mix of peoples in close proximity rather than separated in spatially segregated zones. Clearly, however, the developers had other plans in mind, and structured Kingsport with basic class differences inscribed on the landscape.

In terms of race, Nolen also showed an interesting variation in the thinking of the day. He was aware of the racial structure that a New South Garden City required, but in his writings seemed unwilling to trumpet the segregation of the races. In fact, Nolen appeared determined to ensure that the African American population was not only included in the fabric of the plan, which was essential to a New South Garden City, but also treated with respect, taking into account the sensitivities of this population as part of the labor force in the American South.
In February 1916, just two months into the planning process, Dennis and his associates were clamoring for a plan that would allow them to sell property, presumably as part of a financial scheme to pay for the development of the new city. Nolen responded by assuring Dennis that “I am working steadily on the general plan. . . . It would not be safe, however, in my judgment, to offer any lots for sale until the plan has been worked out more definitely.” The problem as Nolen saw it was that the developers were anxious to sell lots in an area that Nolen believed might be used to provide housing for the African American population he was seeking to incorporate into the plan. As he wrote Dennis, “Another reason for advising against hasty action is that it seems to me now that the land along the railroad to the east of Mad Branch as far as the oak woods is best adapted for the use of negro families. If that is the case, it should be reserved for that purpose, and the lots to the north offered for sale to white families.”

The site Nolen had in mind was not a peripheral “bottom land” but was one that would have suited anyone. Nolen felt compelled, however, to add that “Of course, the subdivision is of such a character that the tract mentioned could be used for either whites or negroes, and the decision will have to be made by the Company.”

Thus early in the planning process the African American population was taken into consideration and was to be included within the planned city. In Kingsport, moreover, the black population was to be situated at a location which either white or blacks would find desirable. This stands in stark contrast to the plan for North Charleston, where the African American population was relegated to the flood plain of Filbin Creek, far from major roadways, services, or amenities. Nolen, then, was sensitive to this population even as segregation was becoming intensified in the South.
In terms of racial structure of Kingsport, Nolen wrote in 1927 that “The white population is at present entirely native American, of what is commonly termed Anglo-Saxon stock. Neither inter-racial nor international difficulties have yet presented themselves to complicate the social and political scheme of the community.”

Concerning the African American population, Nolen added that.

The plan gives due consideration to the colored population, which, being uncommonly high-class and industrious, is esteemed accordingly. Appreciating the value of the colored element in the local labor situation, Kingsport aims to counteract the tendency to migrate to the North, by developing its colored section in marked contrast to the squalid ‘Nigger-town’ districts so common in Southern communities. Here the colored people have had comfortable, new houses built for them, with modern improvements. In this section the playgrounds, schoolhouses and churches have been planned for in ways commensurate with the advanced standards set for the rest of the community. This attractively developed housing area assures its population a worthy place in the social organization.

Perhaps Nolen had observed the position of the African American population in the planned city of North Charleston as well as at other well-established cities in the South and sought to avoid this profoundly unequal treatment in his plans for Kingsport. As the plans developed, however, the difficulty of this task was evident, as he struggled with the growing drive to segregate the races and to marginalize the black population in the South. Nolen in all likelihood also had to struggle with his own prejudices in creating the plan for Kingsport. The Harvard trained landscape architect, despite a sense that the African American population needed to be treated with respect, easily accepted the notion of separation, as noted to Dennis early in the planning process when he suggested that “There should probably be added a negro district, in which ownership by negroes, and perhaps renting, should be definitely limited.”
The plan for Nolen’s “negro district” was highly contentious, with the developers taking a somewhat different view of the African American population than the planner. As Nolen reported to Dennis with regards to decisions the developers were making concerning the African American section: “In general I think these [decisions] are good, although we really have not had time here on account of the pressure of other work... to give the matter the attention which its importance deserves, as for example, in connection with the area for negroes, the question of approach to the property, and the going back and forth to their work through a neighborhood occupied primarily by whites.” Nolen went further, realizing that the developers of Kingsport desired nearly complete separation of the races, and noted that the development of the area for African Americans necessitated answering “the question of just what the negro section should contain in the way of stores and their location, recreation areas, etc.”

The first “negro village” designed by Nolen in the 1916 plan was based on a formalistic grid plan with a central circular feature and a broad landscaped boulevard in the center. The site was described by an associate of Nolen’s as “certainly splendidly adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. The colored population, once established on this attractive hill, will have a most desirable place for pleasant homes and will be well separated from the white population by a stream valley on two sides and by the railroad and The Oaks on the other two sides.” Nolen’s associate added that “The site seems to be ample for Kingsport’s colored families for some time to come. Mr. Platt [of the development company] says there are about 600 negroes in the city now, and the area set aside for the village will provide for over 1,000.” Nolen’s associate felt it necessary to note that “The only objection I heard at Kingsport to this
site for the Negro Village was that it was too bad to give the colored people such a fine piece of land.\textsuperscript{98}

In fact, Nolen’s first plan for the village was abandoned, probably under pressure from the owners, in 1919. The revised plan utilized radials converging at a central feature in a plan reminiscent of Howard’s Garden City design. In August 1920 Nolen described the new plan to Kingsport’s architect Clinton Mackenzie, writing that “We have made another try at the Negro Village. . . and I am enclosing herewith the result. It seems to me an improvement on the other plan, and furthermore, will probably meet all objections. It falls in with your idea of getting a diagonal directly from Sullivan Street into the center of the scheme.” Nolen added that “One of the merits of this scheme, it seems to me, is a greater informality in the arrangement, with more variety in the lots and the street scenes. We have in mind for the diagonal circulation around the center, simply a wide walk, not a roadway.”\textsuperscript{99}

Nolen, then, expended considerable effort in designing the space for the African American population in Kingsport. He also began to feel uncomfortable with the term “Negro Village.” This may have been spurred by a letter from one of his associates, who reported to Nolen on a July 1920 visit to Kingsport, writing that one of the developers “sees no objection to a darky village in the somewhat far foreground of his view from Watauga Street. . . .”\textsuperscript{100} Possibly offended by this racial slur, Nolen wrote Mackenzie shortly thereafter that “It has occurred to me that it might be worth while to get out of the habit of calling it the Negro Village, and give it some name that our colored friends would like. Washington is merely one suggestion. Do you think they would care to have it named for General Armstrong?”\textsuperscript{101} In a statement loaded with a
sensitivity not often heard in the South during this period, Nolen added that “we ought to try to please them.” A few days later, Nolen proposed the name to the Kingsport developers, writing that “The suggestion has been made that we use the name Armstrong Village instead of negro village. Gen. Armstrong, as you know, was the founder of Hampton (Va.) Institute, and the man who led in the movement for the education of negroes after the war.”

Construction of the African American section proceeded in fits and starts. Drawing on the original plan work began around 1917 on a village, but in 1918 work on this section ceased, probably due to the war, and though work again began again 1919, the developers were still undecided as to the layout for the community. In February 1919 Dennis wrote Nolen that “We are planning to start the Negro Village, and are now having plans drawn for three and four room houses.” Concerning Nolen’s plan for the village, Dennis noted that “I notice on your map you have reserved a site for a Negro School. I doubt if the school is built until the village is much better started. On the other hand, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Grant for whom these houses are being built feel it is very important to immediately build a Negro Church, and I am going to ask you if you will indicate on your blue print your choice of location for the same.” Dennis further noted that “The houses will be built as near the proposed New Gates Road as feasible in order to give the negroes the readiest access to town.” The developers were also thinking of the future growth of the city, and Dennis added that “I would like to have a line from you about restrictions in Negro Village. I suggested that they put a clause in the deed forbidding the sale of any property in the village to white people. This caused a commotion, and I wondered if it had ever been done and what was the result.”
Nolen quickly responded that “I am enclosing herewith a blue print... with a suggestion for the location of the first houses, church, etc., to be built in the negro village. On the whole, this is the most accessible portion of the property and the best section, I should think, in which to begin actual construction of roads and buildings.” With regards to the proposed church, Nolen added that “I am not sure that the site suggested for the church would be the permanent one, but I presume the first building constructed would not be permanent, either.”

Armstrong Village, however, was not built as planned. Nolen spent considerable time and effort seeking to design a quality community for the African American population. In examining the situation on the ground in 1920, one of Nolen’s associates noted that “Mr. John Dennis has some purpose, unknown I think, to either Mr. H. R. Dennis or Mr. Johnson for at least the eastern portion of the village site... [Johnson] has an idea Mr. J. D. [Dennis] may plan to have the darkies here temporarily to meet an urgent need—then use the whole site for this unknown purpose of his.” In fact, this tract was made available to Borden Mills for the construction of a mill village for its white workers and their families in 1924. In all likelihood Dennis was already in negotiations with the company to come to Kingsport in 1920, but elected not to inform his planner of this development. The African American section was pushed to the west, into a low lying section between a creek and the downtown section with little of the identity Nolen had struggled so hard to create. Though the housing for the African American population represented an improvement over other cities in the South, Nolen’s vision of a model village for the black population within Kingsport never materialized.
The planning process in Kingsport is illustrative of the attempt to maintain control in the New South Garden City in terms of race. Like North Charleston, the planner and developers for Kingsport sought to include African Americans into the fabric of the plan for the new city. Also like North Charleston, the plan sought to separate the black population from the white population. Different from North Charleston, however, was the attempt by John Nolen to situate the black population in a more advantageous location and to provide it with a strong identity and more progressive plan. Though these efforts came to naught, in terms of racial structure the planning for Kingsport was clearly cut from the New South Garden City model, with an added attempt to humanize the spatially segregated African American population in a more aesthetically pleasing landscape.

In terms of ownership and governance, Kingsport was structured very similar to North Charleston. Property was not to be held communally but was to be sold by the Kingsport Improvement Company for a profit. Nolen lamented this fact in 1918, when he wrote Dennis concerning the first planned residential development of Mackenzie’s houses that “My only regret is that the houses are being sold, because it seems to me there might be some advantages in the future in holding the ownership in the hands of the Company.” Whether Nolen had in mind some communal organization as one of these “advantages” of holding the property is unknown, but clearly the company had profit in mind. In fact, only two months into the planning process with Nolen the developers were clamoring for property sales, generating a pointed reply from Nolen to Dennis, writing that “I am working steadily on the general plan, and expect to have things in shape in time for the meeting, if not sooner. It would not be safe, however, in
my judgment to offer any lots for sale until the plan has been worked out a little more definitely."\textsuperscript{108}

There was, however, considerable property in the original plan that was to be held for the community, including the greenbelt, school sites, several park spaces, the civic plazas, and a municipal golf course. Over time, however, much of this acreage was given over to development, so that in the 1920s the greenbelt was largely gone, the golf course was dropped from the plan, and the civic plazas were subdivided for commercial use. In fact, by 1939, with industrial expansion continuing and migration rapidly expanding the population, the National Resources Committee found that a scant two percent of the city was allotted to park and recreation space, and this included school sites. The report added that "This again is an example of the results of rapid growth causing pressure which was not resisted or directed by a strong administration and adoption of the plan,"\textsuperscript{109} in this case Nolen’s plan which had originally included considerable open public space.

As to governance, Kingsport was structured much like North Charleston. Initially managed by a development company called Kingsport Farms, Incorporated, with Dennis as chairman, the name of the company was later changed to the Kingsport Improvement Corporation. Nolen later wrote in praise of the developers that "This harmonious cooperation was made possible by the organization of an effective instrument for this purpose, in the shape of the Kingsport Improvement Corporation. This organization has stood at the head and front of all the basic activities and is responsible for the town. Chartered as a commercial venture, it has succeeded phenomenally. It started right. In it were represented the various business interests
mainly concerned, the railroad company and the leading industries." Nolen noted that
"The Kingsport Improvement Corporation owns most of the real estate; it builds, rents
and sells houses; it runs a central power-plant; it established an inn, constructed a golf
course and developed the industries."

The development of the plan and the infrastructure, then, was the responsibility
of the Improvement Corporation, much like was found at North Charleston. Unlike
North Charleston, the developers of Kingsport in the 1920s established a municipal
organization, to manage the day to day affairs of the city. Nolen writes that "Local
administration rests with a council of five representatives, elected by the citizens every
four years. The city charter was designed with the intention of achieving the most
efficient results. . . . Under its provisions the council chooses the mayor directly from
one of their number and the mayor appoints a city manager."

Control, however, was not completely local, as the developers of Kingsport who
controlled the development's purse strings were northern investors operating in the New
South milieu, unlike the developers of North Charleston who were residents of the
South Carolina lowcountry. In practical terms, however, this difference appears to have
had little effect on the actual structure of control or in the plans for the two cities. The
difference was probably more significant in terms of the progress of the city, as
Kingsport was much more successful at constructing the infrastructure required to
attract new industries, owing in all likelihood to the much deeper pockets of the New
York investors as compared to Rhett and his associates, operating in the cash strapped
South Carolina lowcountry.
Like North Charleston, Kingsport did not develop as planned. In terms of industrial activity, Kingsport was extraordinarily successful, but the National Resources Committee report in 1939 described Kingsport as a missed opportunity. As the report stated, "the housing consists largely of one-story nondescript cottages. Apparently the conflict of ideals with the opportunity to 'turn a dollar' has been responsible for the slum areas, jerry built housing, and inefficient layout just as it has been in most of our urban areas today."\(^{113}\) The report goes on to note numerous weaknesses in the planning and development of Kingsport, many of which can be traced back to Nolen’s plan and his reluctance to develop adequate zoning and restrictions for the new city. As the report stated, "The sale of lots without restrictions has permitted advantage to be taken of certain weaknesses in the plan to the detriment of these lots and surrounding properties, and has allowed undesirable residential development in the low-lying areas, and an inadequate protection of the borders of the development, permitting undesirable shack growth at points abutting the developed plan."\(^{114}\) In addition, the report noted that "Squatters have been allowed to come in on Improvement Co. land. . . . Inadequate permanent restrictions, with no provision for zoning, have been used to replace the gradual withdrawal of the Improvement Co.’s enforcement."\(^{115}\)

There were positive aspects to the development noted in the report. The handful of planned residential districts were of generally a high quality, and "The treatment of Broad Street is striking and pleasant. . . ." The report goes on to note that "when completed, the civic center at the Circle. . . will be a successful composition. This focal point of the town gives an indication of the quality of mutual relationship which might have existed throughout. It is to be regretted that the proposed park areas facing Broad
Street. . . have been subdivided into business lots. They are still vacant, however, and if returned to their use as planned, would greatly help the effect of the civic group as well as provide much needed permanent open recreation area. The presence of street trees in the business area should be mentioned as they are highly effective and screen to some extent the litter of overhanging signs over the shops on Broad Street.” The civic plazas, however, were never reconstituted, and in a footnote in the 1939 report it was noted that “Both the central park strip and the street trees [on Broad Street] have been removed. . . . This has resulted in destroying one of the city’s most pleasant features.”

Nevertheless, Kingsport represents an expansion and in some ways an improvement on the model of the New South Garden City first articulated at North Charleston. The deep pockets of the owners and the advantageous site and situation of the city stimulated tremendous industrial investment. Kingsport did not incorporate an agricultural development like Charleston Farms, which sets it apart from a full realization of the New South Garden City. Still, there is little doubt that the tracings of the plan for North Charleston can be seen in Kingsport in terms of size, population, form, function, and control. Howard’s ideals as well as the aesthetic of the City Beautiful are clearly present in the planning if not the realization of Kingsport, as modified to meet the conditions of the New South. Thus, Nolen could write in 1927 that “Kingsport, Tennessee is in various respects of our most remarkable American examples of modern city planning.” That was undoubtedly true, but more to the point, Kingsport represents an excellent exemplar of a planning tradition that emerged in the New South in the first decades of the twentieth century, a tradition that began
with North Charleston and that Nolen would continue in planning another project in the American South: Farm City, North Carolina.

"To Make Something Finer Than We Have Seen"

During the period that Nolen was laboring on Kingsport there was a growing push to create new communities in rural areas to staunch the flow of people from the countryside to the city. The goal of these efforts was to provide the opportunity for farmers in the countryside to live in a community, as opposed to on a family farm, in the hope of lessening the isolation that was thought to deaden rural life and drive farmers from the land to the rapidly growing cities. These efforts got a decided boost with the close of World War I, when soldiers returning from Europe appeared wholly uninterested in returning to the drudgery of farm life when the city beckoned with both economic and social opportunities.

This movement took various guises and went under a variety of names, one of which was the "Farm City" movement. The "returning soldier" was the target of many of these efforts, and commanded considerable attention towards the end of the 1910s. For example, in a letter from G. E. Maxwell to Dr. F. H. Newell, Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Illinois, and formerly head of the U. S. Reclamation Service, Maxwell stated that "I think it is equally established as a result of the war that the economic strength of the nation demands that so far as possible every farmer should produce its own food with its own labor from its own garden home." Maxwell continued, "The plan of settling returned soldiers on the farms is the most desirable one to the full extent that it can be made practicable." Maxwell realized, however, that "After the land has been reclaimed... three difficulties present themselves: First, the
lack of capital on the part of the settler; second, the uncertainty of markets, and third, the lack of the necessary knowledge of farming by many who might otherwise desire the adoption of this plan for themselves."\textsuperscript{118}

For Maxwell and many others, California represented a golden opportunity to settle soldiers in rural colonies. As Maxwell wrote, “Southern California offers an ideal location for the establishment of a sufficient number of such colonists to supply all her needs for seasonal labor and for supplemental labor in industry and for labor on the watersheds.” Whether in California or elsewhere, however, Maxwell realized that “The underlying problem is not to provide farms for returning soldiers: that is merely one angle of it; the problem as a whole is to fit the returning soldier into an economic system which will provide for the utilization of his labor in such a way as to furnish first, his own living, and second, to create new wealth and defend and develop natural resources in a way that will avoid competition or conflict with existing agricultural or labor interests.”\textsuperscript{119}

California was a hotbed of resettlement and rural colonization efforts during the early decades of the twentieth century. Planned communities like Atascadero, established in 1913 as “a colony providing ideal conditions for residence and industry”\textsuperscript{120} as well as agriculture, drew considerable attention during the period. One of the leaders of this movement in California was Elwood Mead, a civil engineer who was involved in land reclamation efforts in Wyoming and Australia before moving to California. Mead’s activities and promotional writings, cut from the Progressive Era cloth of public and private activism and the creation of a strong environmental aesthetic
in both urban and rural areas, drew considerable attention to the notion of land reclamation and resettlement and provided an intellectual framework for these efforts.

Mead was also involved in practical projects as well, such as the Durham Agricultural Colony in southern California. He was named director of this colony by the California State Commission on Colonization and Rural Credits in 1917. One of the goals of this “demonstration project” was to attract white farmers to the increasingly minority dominated countryside, a plan which Mead and others supported. Through these and other efforts, the notion of resettlement became a talisman for declining rural areas. Mead, who served as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation for the U. S. Department of the Interior between 1924 and 1936, became one of its philosophical leaders.

In the South, attempts at agricultural colonization were also prevalent, many inspired by Mead’s efforts. South Carolina’s efforts to lure immigrants from Europe in the early 1900s, culminating in the failed voyage of the Wittekind in 1906, were for the most part unsuccessful, but not for a lack of effort. Attempts to settle farmers in the South Carolina countryside, which included projects such as Homewood in eastern South Carolina and Happyville, a Jewish colony in western South Carolina, were generally characterized as small in scale and isolated from the larger society.

In eastern North Carolina, however, the attempt to develop a “Farm City” represented a bold effort clearly drawn from Howard’s Garden City ideal, and illustrates a further evolution of the New South Garden City. The Farm City project in North Carolina was led by Hugh MacRae of Wilmington, an investment banker and developer. As Conkin writes, MacRae was “was an engineer and businessman who graduated from
the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1885. In the next twenty years he amassed a sizable fortune in the railroad and public utilities business in the area of his home at Wilmington, North Carolina.” 121 Conkin further noted that “MacRae imbibed freely of the positivistic optimism of the turn of the century. He envisioned unending progress through science and the adaptation of experts to all fields of endeavor.” 122 MacRae was a New South booster and successful entrepreneur, and “As a wealthy capitalist, he defended the right, even the duty, of individuals to amass wealth, but that the same time he believed that humanitarianism was the only acceptable goal of either wealth or science. He wanted the idea of public service and public morality to so capture the business world that wealth would be shared voluntarily for the common good.” 123 In MacRae’s vision of the future, “Philanthropy, not taxation, was the desirable means to social progress.” 124

MacRae was an interesting character, prominently involved in both the political and economic life of eastern North Carolina. In 1898, he was one of the acknowledged leaders of a “coup” which ousted the Republican dominated municipal government of Wilmington, a government which included several African Americans in prominent positions. MacRae reportedly procured a Gatling gun as one of several tools designed to intimidate the African American population during the coup and the ensuing riot which left at least eleven black citizens of Wilmington dead and forced hundreds of others to flee for their lives. 125

With Democratic rule returned to eastern North Carolina, MacRae turned his attention to economic concerns, including the promotion of farm colonies designed to attract white settlers to the vacant land of eastern North Carolina’s countryside. As
head of the North Carolina Development Company, MacRae purchased around 200,000 acres of uncleared and undrained land north of Wilmington and "recruited Europeans to immigrate to south eastern North Carolina in exchange for 10 acres and a house."¹²⁶ These small colonies attracted Dutch, Hungarians, and other Europeans to work on MacRae's farms. The largest truck farm colony was Castle Hayne, from which boxcars filled with produce pulled away, carrying fruits and vegetables for the grocery stores of the rapidly growing northeastern cities.

MacRae's Farm City project, however, was different in both scale and intent than these small farm colonies. The goal was to build a large community with both agricultural and industrial activities, and an urban "social center" that would provide opportunity for interaction not found on isolated farmsteads or in MacRae's small colonies. This bold plan was clearly drawn from Howard's Garden City ideal, which MacRae, alone among boosters of New South Garden Cities, acknowledged as a major inspiration.

In fact, MacRae's vision of Farm City was not the first attempt to build a Garden City in eastern North Carolina (Figure 6.3). The agricultural and industrial city of New Holland was planned for a 50,000-acre tract in northeastern North Carolina, in the wild lands of the Dismal Swamp. The site for the new city and the surrounding farm land was to be created by draining Lake Mattamuskeet, a large lake that lay eight miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The plan, which was announced in 1915, was suggested by the Drainage Division of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The scheme was incredibly ambitious: "As the lake-bottom lay about 3 feet below sea-level, it was necessary to pump all water out of the lake to begin the work of reclamation. A great system of
canals was constructed to carry the surface water from every part of the district to a mammoth pumping plant, capable of raising this water up and pumping it over into a great outfall canal, 70 feet wide, whence it flowed to the sea, 8 miles away." The 1917 report by the American Institute of Architects noted that "This outfall canal was constructed broad enough and deep enough for transportation purposes, and boats carrying freight and passengers already go and come on it every day." The report also stated that noted landscape architect Harlan P. Kelsey was contracted to design the centerpiece of the plan, the city of New Holland, which was "laid out on the most modern of lines, with radiating and circumferential arteries and boulevards. Traversing the main axis of the layout, and leading to the ocean outfall, is the central canal. . . ."  

Figure 6.3  
Plan of New Holland, North Carolina, 1916
Modeled on drainage projects in Holland, the world’s largest pumping station was put in place and a canal dug to take the water from the lake to the ocean. The project was initially funded by local interests, though by 1918 the lake was in the hands of northern investors. Though the 1917 report of New Holland by the American Institute of Architects was largely a fantasy, since little of the grandiose plan was actually put into effect, it embodied considerable vision of a new agricultural and industrial future for eastern North Carolina. Moreover, the plan in all likelihood caught the eye of Hugh MacRae, which may have emboldened him to move from small agricultural colonies to the much more ambitious plans for Farm City. And though Farm City did not develop as planned either, it still represents one of the most interesting efforts to create a new urban environment in the New South in the first decades of the twentieth century.\(^{128}\)

Early in 1920 MacRae held a conference of several leading progressive advocates of rural development to promote the idea of developing Farm City (Figure 6.4). One of the attendees was Charles S. Bird of Massachusetts, a planning advocate and author of Town Planning for Small Communities. As an expert on town planning, Bird was appointed “chairman of a committee to produce a report on the possibilities of developing Farm City.”\(^{129}\) He had also apparently been tasked to identify a landscape architect or town planner who might be interested in taking on such a project, and contacted John Nolen in March. Nolen, as was his nature, responded positively to the inquiry, quickly proposing a plan of action. As Nolen wrote Bird, “In the first place, it seems to me that the work would naturally divide itself into two parts. The first stage would be preliminary work for the purpose of selecting a site and making a report on...
Figure 6.4
Plan of Farm City, North Carolina, 1922
the same, with recommendations. The second stage would be the work that would be undertaken later, and would consist in making plans, giving advice, and rendering other town planning services in connection with the planning and the construction and development of the project.” Nolen hastened to add that, in terms of financial obligations, “At first we would be concerned only with preliminary work.”

From its inception, MacRae and the other promoters of Farm City drew inspiration from Ebenezer Howard and his Garden City. Indeed, in many ways, the initial ideals of Farm City as expressed by MacRae and Bird were drawn almost completely from the work of the English visionary. In a fascinating piece of correspondence reflecting this early inspiration, Bird wrote Lawrence Veiller of the National Housing Association, and one of the leading Progressive Era advocates of planning in the United States, and reported that “Mr. Hugh MacRae of Wilmington, N.C. and others recently had a conference to discuss the possibility of establishing in this country an American Letchworth. Mr. MacRae has been for years in colonization work and believes that if it is to be successful that industrial activities must be combined with agricultural activities to develop a community.” Bird added that “In the North Carolina section there are available some rather interesting tracts, and there is a large amount of interest in a garden city movement, from a social point of view, without any idea of profit excepting such profit as would be returned toward the city development.” That Farm City was not intended to profit MacRae in some fashion is a dubious proposition, but clearly as a New South Garden City. Farm City represents a further evolution in the model as first envisioned by Rhett and his associates.

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Bird was specifically asking Veiller, as one of the leaders of planning in the United States, "if you could give me the name of anyone who might be actively interested in some such development; also whether you could give me suggestions as to whom we might employ as an executive secretary to line up a prospectus for such a development." That the plan for Farm City was something new and different, and thus a challenge to the emerging profession of planning, was clear from Veiller's lukewarm response to Bird's inquiry. As Veiller wrote Bird, "I have your very interesting letter... with reference to the recent conference held in Wilmington, N.C., at which was discussed the possibility of establishing garden cities in America. As you can well imagine, this is not a new subject for consideration to the members of this Association. Ever since Letchworth has proved to be the great success that it has been, there have been suggestions that a similar movement be set on foot here in America. Up to the present time, it has not seemed to many of us who are most deeply interested in the success of such a scheme that the time was ripe for such a movement. I am a little bit in doubt myself as to whether this is just the right time, though I think possibly the time might be ripe a year or two from now." Veiller did not specify to Bird the conditions that he believed would be altered within a year or two to guarantee success of such a venture, but in a further effort to dampen Bird's enthusiasm for the project, he added that "I should also question the wisdom of starting such a movement in the South, but that is a question about which opinions might well differ."

Veiller claimed great interest in the Garden City plans that were then underway in England and in Europe, and noted that "We had hoped that when the time came for concerted effort to establish garden cities in America, the leadership in this movement
might be taken by this Association for it has seemed to us that it properly belongs here.” Veiller added that “Our limited finances, however precluded our undertaking work of this kind.” Veiller could not help but make a pitch for money, noting that “Were the finances to be provided, we should hold ourselves ready to respond to the call and to undertake a movement for the bringing about of the establishment of garden cities in America.” Despite his lack of interest in the Farm City project as the first Garden City in America, Veiller acknowledged that Howard’s movement “is to my mind one of the most important movements that this century has seen and one that is very greatly needed in this country.”

For whatever reason, assuming Veiller’s reaction to Farm City was any indication, the notion of building new cities in the South designed along the principles associated with Howard’s Garden City had little support among the planning establishment. It would appear that Veiller was completely unaware that between 1912 and 1920 a planning tradition in the American South, largely based on principles associated with the Garden City as well as the City Beautiful, was emerging. The plan for Farm City stands as a key moment in the development of this tradition, coming just as Nolen was completing his plans for Kingsport and also becoming reacquainted with Charleston, and thus the planned city of North Charleston. Farm City, then, does not represent a radical shift in planning in the New South, but in fact was a continuation of a vibrant planning tradition firmly situated in Progressive Era planning principles.

Despite Veiller’s lukewarm reaction to the Farm City plan, MacRae was a believer, and spent considerable time and energy searching for investors. In addition to philanthropic capitalists he believed might be interested in investing in a model town,
he sought to attract the attention of officials with federal and state government.

MacRae was fairly successful in attracting the interest of federal officials. For instance, in November 1920, William Smythe of the Department of Interior, visited MacRae and reviewed his land colonization efforts. Shortly after his visit, Smyth reported on it to Nolen, noting that "I confess, I had thought of [the South] as worn out country, laboring under the burden of adverse psychology, both within and without, and for this reason an unpromising field for development, though doubtless rather richly endowed by Nature. What I saw in my two day’s inspection... has completely changed my view. I am convinced that there are extraordinary opportunities for the finest work in the line of rural reconstruction, and that what has already been accomplished in the face of many obstacles amounts to a fundamental demonstration of the proposition.” Smyth was effusive in his praise for MacRae’s efforts, writing that “I am very much in sympathy with Mr. MacRae’s purpose to make something finer than we have seen at least outside of California, in the way of rural life.” He added that “there is no reason why there should not be the best roads and high standards of beauty, comfort and convenience in house and grounds—together with community centers, offering every form of satisfaction to social, intellectual and spiritual needs and instincts.” Smythe concluded his report to Nolen by noting that “I have written you at the suggestion of Mr. MacRae, and will only add that I shall be happy to do anything in my power to help the work along.”

MacRae was apparently hoping that Smythe’s letter would spur Nolen to contact private philanthropists who might be interested in the project. After receiving Smythe’s letter, Nolen wrote John M. Glenn of the Russell Sage Foundation, developers of Forest
Hills, that “I am still thinking very much about the possibility of new cities—cities for the present age—cities designed and built with skill and economy to serve modern life—cities which if successful would radically modify and perhaps almost revolutionize our ideas of urban life. Indeed, such new cities might bring equally great changes to rural life.” Nolen developed the last point for Glenn, noting that “You may have heard something of the proposed Farm City project in eastern North Carolina. It has been under discussion for some months, and a meeting is to be held in New York on January 31st which may result in definite action. I am enclosing the outline of a scheme for a survey and general plans for a Farm City which I drew up a short time ago, and a letter from William E. Smythe of the Department of Interior, written after his visit.” Careful not to sound like he was making a pitch for financial support for the project—which he surely was—Nolen wrote that “My purpose in drawing attention to the Farm City is not in any way to suggest any support from the Sage Foundation, but merely to give you information about it.” Mindful of Veiller’s criticism of the plan to Bird, Nolen hastened to add that Farm City “is quite independent of the Garden City idea, which is primarily industrial, while this is primarily agricultural.”

In terms of attracting investors, one of MacRae’s strategies was to hold conferences in northern cities in the hopes of inducing progressive capitalists to open their wallets. As MacRae wrote Nolen in January 1921 prior to the January 31 conference, “We are beginning to get ‘acceptances’ for the meeting and it looks now as if we would have from twenty-five to possibly forty persons present, each of whom can make a real contribution toward the success of the Farm City project.” This strategy also placed burdens on the parties initially interested in the scheme, such as Nolen, who
were charged with the task of bringing other interested parties to the table. As MacRae noted to Nolen, "We are counting on each of our primary group bringing at least six important people to the meeting so I trust you have lined up your six..."139

The pressure on these initial parties to find investors for the project was intense. Prior to the January 31 conference, Nolen also received a letter from one of MacRae's associates, Matthew Hale of the South Atlantic Maritime Corporation. Headquartered in Washington, the purpose of the corporation was to promote the services of the five major ports of the Southeast, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Brunswick, and Jacksonville. Hale, in fact, was from Charleston and was well acquainted with developments in the city, in all probability including Rhett's plans to create a great industrial and agricultural city on Charleston's Neck.

Hale wrote Nolen care of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce, knowing that he would be in that city giving his speech promoting the benefits of planning to the South Carolina lowcountry on January 25. Concerning the Farm City project, Hale wrote Nolen that "We have been making good progress in regard to the New York meeting January 31st, but not sufficiently good. The one great danger now is our not having a sufficient number of men present who will be in a position to subscribe the preliminary fund so that the actual work can go ahead." Hale sounded a somewhat desperate tone, writing Nolen that "You will remember that you said, when we were in Boston, that you would stop over in Philadelphia on your way North and get three or four people from Philadelphia for the meeting. We are all counting on you to do this... In addition to the Philadelphia people, can't you possibly think of some other people to whom you could send telegrams or letters from Charleston?" With the time of the New
York conference approaching, Hale felt compelled to remind Nolen that “all of us who are vitally interested should secure the attendance of at least six men who would be in a position to subscribe. Mr. Oveson, Mr. Bird, Mr. MacRae and I are each working on that basis, and we are counting on you to do the same.”

MacRae’s goal was to attract wealthy investors to the Farm City plan, which would then attract high level government involvement and support. As MacRae noted to Nolen, “if we are assured of ten or fifteen prominent men who could supply capital to the undertaking, if it interested them, I think we could get [Interior] Secretary Payne to be present.” MacRae added that “I went to see him with Mr. Wm. E. Smythe and had a very satisfactory conference. He is deeply interested and says that the only way, in his opinion, to stop the drift from rural communities to the towns and cities is to make attractive surroundings and social conditions in addition to evolving an agricultural scheme that is profitable.”

As an outgrowth of the 1921 conference, MacRae and others established the Farm Cities Corporation of America, which was intended to be the instrument for the realization of MacRae’s dream. The statement of principles was clear in its identification of the problem and the proposed solution: “The present drift of population from the country to the cities is creating a condition that is dangerous to the nation. The home-owning and home-loving citizen is the greatest of our National assets. To him this nation already owes a vast debt.” The statement further notes that “The land, as our primary source of wealth, is necessarily the basis of our civilization. We are seeing that a population in which the urban industrial communities over-balance the rural communities results in industrial unrest, with a tax upon the foundation of our
present civilization.” MacRae and his associates argued in the statement of principles that “This dangerous drift from the country to the city can be lessened by an organized effort on the part of men of vision and capital in establishing a series of agricultural communities, or farm cities, based on sound business and economic principles.”

Though the overarching purpose of MacRae’s Farm City was somewhat different from both North Charleston and Kingsport, it was cut from similar cloth. MacRae, in his statement of principles, summarized it nicely: “The important underlying principles upon which such communities will be based are: First, a properly developed system of agriculture suitable to the geographic location of the community proposed, one which will enable owners of farms to make a comfortable living among agreeable surroundings. Second, a properly developed system of allied industries which will round out the economic life and thus give a pulse to the community. Third, a carefully worked out social center through which the members of the community can satisfy their natural and proper craving for social and intellectual companionship.”

Farm City, then, represented an ambitious effort to transform rural life in America by providing unheard opportunities to those people choosing to live in the country. To implement these principles and develop Farm City, MacRae set forward a specific multi-step plan. The first step was to “Organize a ‘pioneer company’ with an authorized capital of $50,000,” managed by a board of directors drawn from business, philanthropic, and government circles. The second step called on “men of vision” to “Invest $10,000 in the pioneer company for preliminary operation, including the making of surveys and examinations essential for more complete planning.” The third step was to “Secure a tract of 10,000 acres of productive land not now being

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cultivated." Further steps involved organizing a company capitalized at $1,000,000 to actually buy the land and develop the community, providing infrastructure and amenities to the migrants coming to the new development.\(^{144}\)

With his principles and plan in hand, MacRae continued his search for investors. The Board of Directors, which was to be a tool to attract the "men of vision" sought by MacRae, included numerous prominent names, most from the North. The president of the Board was Raymond H. Oveson of Boston, Massachusetts. Also sitting on the board was Charles S. Bird of Massachusetts, F. H. Newell, then living in Washington as an official with Land Reclamation, and Matthew Hale, of the South Atlantic Maritime Corporation. Rounding out the board was Carl Vrooman, formerly Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, as well as philanthropists Gifford Pinchot of Philadelphia and Sarah McDonald Sheridan of New York City. In addition to the Board of Directors, MacRae also assembled a fifty person Advisory Board, which included representatives from universities, foundations, government, the media, and business. Elwood Mead, William Smythe, John Nolen, and even a representative from the Boy Scouts of America were listed as members of the Advisory Board. Though MacRae was the driving force behind Farm City, he had assembled an elite group of Progressive Era leaders to push the project forward.\(^{145}\)

In terms of size, population, form, function, and structure, MacRae was clearly seeking this group to attract investors to a New South Garden City. Though its purpose and organization were somewhat different, MacRae's vision fits nicely with other New South city building projects. These differences in many ways represent a further elaboration of the dream of building a new urban future in the New South, one which...
combined the workers of the land with the workers of the factory in an aesthetically pleasing urban space.

The size of Farm City was consistently envisioned to be around 10,000 acres, as stated in the materials published by the Farm City Corporation of America. The size of the "social center" envisioned by MacRae was somewhat less specific, though John Nolen, in a preliminary report concerning the development, noted that "the social and industrial city... might occupy 1,000 acres." A city of around 1,000 acres comports nicely with the size of both North Charleston and Kingsport, and the overall size of the project fits nicely with Howard's ideal for a Garden City.

Less specific was the projected population of Farm City. Nowhere in the documents generated by the Corporation or by Nolen is a total population of the planned community given. It is possible, however, to derive a rough calculation based on the development plan of the project. The farms in the development were projected to be between 10 and 40 acres, and using an average farm size of around 20 acres on the 9,000 acres of farm land, there would likely have been around 450 farms. Assuming a population of seven persons per household, there would have been a farm population of around 3,150 persons. In a 1,000-acre city, the approximate size of Kingsport, there would likely have been a population of between 20,000 and 25,000 persons. Given these projections, the population of Farm City as planned stood at around 25,000 persons, which was not far below Howard's estimate of 30,000, and was in line with plans for Kingsport and North Charleston.

The form of Farm City was never planned in the detail of either North Charleston or Kingsport, largely because of MacRae's failure to attract investors to
implement his vision. Like other New South Garden Cities, however, the design of Farm City that was produced by Nolen was largely based on the Progressive Era planning aesthetic which drew on both the Garden City and the City Beautiful. Indeed, the plan as proposed by Nolen for Farm City represents a bold attempt to draw the agricultural sector into direct contact with the city.

The morphology of Farm City was influenced by its proposed site. The site MacRae had chosen for the project was about 30 miles north of Wilmington, the largest city in the area. In his 1920 report on his visit, Smythe described the site to Nolen in glowing terms: "The tract of 9,000 acres (sic) which Mr. MacRae has selected for the site of the new colony is exceedingly well adapted for the purpose; soil topography, geographical location, and transportation facilities are all excellent, while the mild climate, and abundant, well-distributed rainfall, are highly favorable to intensive cultivation with profitable returns." 

It is unclear whether or not Nolen actually visited the Farm City site during this period. While working to generate new planning work in the South in 1920, Nolen wrote MacRae that "An inquiry has just come about city planning for Charleston, South Carolina, which may require a personal visit. I am hoping, for the benefit of all concerned, that it can be combined with work in eastern North Carolina, either the Farm City project or city planning for Wilmington. . . ." During Nolen's swing through the South in early 1921, which included his stop in Charleston, he did not visit Wilmington, since there were no definite planning activities and no offer of payment for the trip. Nolen, with good reason, resisted traveling for professional services without
compensation, and in his correspondence concerning Farm City never actually mentions visiting eastern North Carolina.

Still, Nolen was able to generate a preliminary plan and a report broadly outlining his ideas for Farm City. In his report, Nolen described the basic features of the new community: “The contemplated area for intensive farming contains 10,000 acres. This should be mapped out, in the rough, to suit the lands, transportation, drainage, and scheme of agriculture; and then worked out in detail by a Garden City architect and engineer, and a landscape architect who has had experience with farming communities and is in sympathy with the general plan.”¹⁵⁰ Nolen clearly envisioned himself as “sympathetic” to the plan.

In searching for a model for the “social center,” he consciously drew attention to the work of Howard, noting that “The Garden City could well take Letchworth, England as a guide. Ample provisions should be made for all industries helpful to an agricultural community, and all of the social activities which would prove to be the ‘cement’ of the project.” Nolen envisioned the urban and agricultural worlds drawn close together at Farm City:

The Community Center should, in a word, be so attractive that there would not be room for the fatal longing of the socially inclined for other communities; and yet the outlying borders should extend into territory crude enough to suit the restless spirit of the man who likes the frontier experience. With varying distances from the center, the farms could increase from gardens up to five and ten-acre tracts, and then to twenty acres, with reserves of equal amounts, so that the man who evolves into a dairy or stock farmer can have an area of from twenty to sixty acres available without spoiling the compact community life and the necessary facilities incident thereto.¹⁵¹

Nolen’s drawing of the “Proposed Farm City” was a sketchy creation, though it does provide some insight into the basic morphological vision of the new community.
In typical New South Garden City morphology, it is centered on open space, identified on the plan as the Village Green. The Village Green was octagonal, with five avenues radiating outward from the central feature. One of these avenues was envisioned as a broad, divided landscaped boulevard that connected the Village Green with a smaller circle located near Giddons Pond. In classic New South Garden City style, this linear connection was intended to serve as the major boulevard of the new city.

Surrounding the Village Green was to be a community building, a library, a museum, a federal building, an inn, and a school. On the smaller circular feature at Giddons Pond was to be a pavilion and band stand, a country club, a bath house, and a boat house. Along the avenue connecting these features Nolen placed a commercial center as well as a “demonstration place,” presumably a place to display new agricultural innovations.

Outside of this central area, Nolen situated a section for industries and “Agricultural and Industrial Helpers.” This area also included a school, and may have been envisioned as a working class area, in contrast to the areas near the Village Green. Radiating outward from the urban center were small farms of two acres, which gave way to farms of twenty acres, and then to larger tracts of forty acres. In the out area were also tracts for public pasturage and forest reservations.

The plan for Farm City was purposefully sketchy, and intended to show possibilities for the development to interested investors. Still, the Nolen plan for the project, which drew on the two foundations of Progressive Era planning thought, the Garden City and the City Beautiful, illustrated the possibilities of drawing the city and country together into a morphological whole. In the tradition of New South Garden
City visionaries, the developers of Farm City sought to change the dynamic of life in the South by creating a new urban environment. The key, however, to the success of the venture was the creation of a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing urban center, surrounded by small farms worked by yeoman farmers. Thus the developers envisioned “Lay[ing] out and develop[ing] a social center which will supply to the community that great human need, the lack of which is the chief cause for the drift away from the land to towns and cities.” And more than that, the developers of Farm City dreamed that “The social center will be so developed as to make a strong appeal to those now in cities who have the desire to return to a normal life in rural communities.”

In terms of function, Farm City was clearly planned to incorporate both agricultural and industrial activities. This multifunctionality was spelled out in the various statements of principles issued by the Farm Cities Corporation. For the agricultural sector, the plan called for “The choice of a healthful location suitable for the development of a system of intensified and diversified agriculture which will enable owners of small farms while raising their own food supplies to conduct profitable farming operations in an agreeable environment.” As to the industrial sector, the plan called for “The establishment of industries supplemental to agriculture to such an extent and under such conditions as to provide for a well-balanced economic life without rendering the ‘Farm City’ less attractive or less healthful for the inhabitants.”

Other functions were to be incorporated into the “Social Center.” A community hall, parks, recreational opportunities, schools, and a commercial district were all to be situated in the urban center. Thus, Farm City as conceived by MacRae and designed by
Nolen was intended to be a fully functioning city, albeit one in which agricultural activities would be predominant.

Because the plans for Farm City were generally of a preliminary nature, evaluating the control of the project is problematic. This is particularly true in terms of class and racial structure of the proposed city. Ownership and governance were more clearly spelled out, largely as part of the effort to assure potential investors of the economic success of the Farm City project.

In terms of class, there was no indication in the various publications of the developers or in the correspondence that there would be any class distinctions within the new city. Much of the rhetoric of the developers, in fact, implies a strong measure of equality of opportunity in the project, claiming that the goal was “The development and scientific management of the ‘Farm City’ in such a manner as to insure the economic success of the inhabitants, and at the same time to provide the fullest opportunity for intellectual development and social intercourse.” There was no mention of an elite residential district such as Pinewood Park in North Charleston, though the Nolen plan shows an area reserved for “Agricultural and Industrial Helpers” that may have been intended as a somewhat lower class district. Still, there was no corresponding district for owners and managers of large farms or factories, so it is unclear what class distinction Nolen, guided by MacRae, was considering.

The class distinction that was incorporated into the plan for Farm City involved the process of choosing the residents of the proposed development. As the Farm Cities Corporation stated in one of their brochures, the plan called for the Corporation to “Purchase the land, drain, clear, subdivide and put it into good agricultural condition.
with well built roads, providing reliable transportation; sell it in small tracts to farmers carefully selected as to their qualifications, who will live upon the land on conditions which secure their independence and comfort, and ultimately pay all cost with interest." The plan called for the Corporation to "Prepare waiting lists giving addresses of people who are desirous of obtaining a small farm and home, and who have the necessary qualifications to make good in a rural community." The final step in this process called for the Corporation to "Select from this list only those families the members of which have proved their thrift by having available a small amount of money to invest in making the first payment and who are willing to abide by the regulations established to secure cooperation during the settlement period." 157

The mechanism by which new residents would be chosen to live in Farm City was not completely specified, but in all probability it would have involved MacRae interviewing potential settlers and accepting or rejecting them. The criteria—other than proven "thrift"—by which potential residents were to be judged was not clearly specified, but since it involved access to some amount of money to invest it would have worked to keep out lower class people with little access to cash. Thus, there was a measure of class structure in the admittance process to Farm City, though the class divisions internal to the new city were, for the most part, unspecified.

This then raises the issue of racial structure of the new city. Both North Charleston and Kingsport specifically made space for the African American population within the fabric of their plans. Interestingly, in the case of Farm City, there was no mention of the African American population in any of the documents generated by the Farm City Corporation. There was also no mention of African Americans in
MacRae's correspondence concerning the Farm City project. Given MacRae's desire to attract white immigrants to eastern North Carolina, combined with the fact the African American population was not mentioned, it would appear that Farm City was intended to be for whites only. Whether or not this gave any cause for hesitation by Nolen or the other promoters of the project, including the elite Board of Directors and the Advisory Board, is unclear. Apparently none of the backers of Farm City abandoned the project for this reason.

As to ownership and governance, Farm City was structured along the lines of other New South Garden Cities. Farm City was to be developed for a profit, not as a communal or philanthropic endeavor. In classic New South tradition, the goal of the project was to "turn a dime," and the documents generated by the Farm Cities Corporation assured investors of the financial soundness of the scheme. The plan involved establishing a "pioneer company" that would do the initial work before turning the development over to an "ultimate company." As the developers noted, "The capital stock of the 'pioneer company' will be divided into shares of $100 each and will be fully paid and non-assessable. Upon the organization of the 'ultimate company,' it will assume all of the liabilities of the 'pioneer company' and the stock of the 'pioneer company' will be exchanged for an equal amount of the stock of the 'ultimate company.'" The developers noted further that "The capital stock of the 'ultimate company' will be approximately $1,000,000, or such amount as the directors of the 'pioneer company' may consider necessary for carrying out the purposes of the organization." 158
The promoters of Farm City were keenly aware that a communal or philanthropic venture would meet with little success in the New South. They assured potential investors that there would be "provision of ample capital for carrying out the project. The weakening element of philanthropy will be eliminated by providing for a fair return of the developing capital." MacRae and his associates added a twist, in all likelihood based on Howard’s model of financing his Garden City, noting that "At the same time, the interests of the community will be protected by providing that all revenue of the developing corporation above a fixed percentage on invested capital shall be devoted to the welfare of the community."\(^{159}\)

Ultimately, however, ownership and governance of Farm City was to be in the hands of its residents. The Farm Cities Corporation envisioned at some point in time "The ultimate transfer to the inhabitants of the ‘Farm City,’ for a fair consideration, of all rights held by the developing corporation." The developers added, however, that "This transfer will not be made until the success of the ‘Farm City’ becomes assured, and it becomes evident that its further development can be safely entrusted to the community." As with North Charleston and Kingsport, ownership was to be in private hands, and the course of development was not to be directed through communal effort. Governance as well was to be in the hands of the development company for some unspecified period of time, though eventually it would shift to the residents of the new city. Initial ownership of Farm City, then, was to be in the hands of a development company, with "Sale of farms and town lots under certain restrictions as will enable the Farm Cities Corporation to control the development of the community in such a way as to safeguard its best interests."\(^{160}\)
Thus, in terms of size, population, form, function, and control, Farm City was drawn from the New South Garden City tradition. Though its purpose was different from that of North Charleston and Kingsport, the plan for Farm City clearly drew on the model of urban planning then emerging in the American South. Farm City, in fact, comes closer to Howard’s vision of the “Town-Country Magnet” than either North Charleston or Kingsport, but it was clearly filtered through the lens of New South boosterism and economic constraints.

As has been noted, Farm City did not develop as planned. MacRae searched tirelessly for investors in the project, holding a second Farm City conference at the Hotel Biltmore in Washington, DC on February 3, 1922. Presumably, the Board of Directors and many members of the Advisory Board were present. Even with the backing of this elite group, however, MacRae was unable to attract capital to his scheme.

In 1924, MacRae visited Europe, and during the trip visited Letchworth, where he met Ebenezer Howard as well as Dugald MacFayden, Howard’s biographer. Upon his return to North Carolina, MacRae wrote Nolen. “This brings me up to a suggestion made by Dr. MacFayden of Letchworth, namely that we get a group of important people in the United States to invite Mr. Ebenezer Howard, who is the founder and apostle of the Garden City movement in England to make a tour in the United States, and give a series of lectures for the purpose of raising the capital required to initiate the movement. Mr. Ebenezer Howard raised the capital for Letchworth and Welwyn, and would have the right approach to the wealthy people of this Country. He would come with a prestige which would make his visit acceptable. and I think the plan is really a good
one." Nolen, as an interested professional with his eye trained on planning opportunities, responded "I am heartily in favor of having Ebenezer Howard here, and the program that you indicate," though he hastened to add that he did "not know of any way in which I could assist in making the necessary arrangements."

A year later, the plan to bring Howard to the United States bore fruit. Howard came to New York for the International Town and City Planning Conference, held in April, 1925. As MacRae, constantly in search of a scheme to attract investors, wrote Nolen, "... I received a letter yesterday from Mr. MacFayden of Letchworth saying that Mr. Ebenezer Howard, the father of garden cities and therefore the grandfather of farm cities, would be in New York in April. I think we should gather all of the clans together and make a final effort to arrange a series of lectures which Mr. Howard would deliver for the purpose of creating an active interest in the farm city idea with a view to obtaining the financial backing from 'Patriotic Capital' in sufficient amount to put one real demonstration farm city before the world in proper shape."

While MacRae searched for a magic formula to attract capital to his plan in 1925, he ran up against a new competitor for the attention of Howard and investors who might be interested in such a plan. Philanthropic interests in New York were also looking to use Howard's visit to the United States to draw attention to a plan to create Garden Cities outside New York. Charles S. Bird, Jr., wrote MacRae in February 1925 that there was a push "to arrange a special dinner or other kind of meeting to have Mr. Ebenezer Howard expound the garden city idea and ask if I can arrange to be present." Then, Bird informed MacRae "that a new group of Federated Civic Societies is being organized and Mr. Frederick A. Delano, the chairman of..."
committee for the regional plan of New York and its environments is in the process of working this out. In connection with this, a plan is on foot to have a special group interested in garden city work connected with the Federated Civic Societies experiment in building a model town. Of course, their interest is to accomplish something in the neighborhood of New York. ¹⁶⁵

MacRae realized that building such a model community outside New York would siphon off any investment capital that might have been available for his Farm City project. Thus he quickly wrote Bird that “It would seem that the garden city idea is a thoroughly good proposition for the extension of public interest into the broader idea of planning for self-contained rural communities, which we might look upon as ‘Stars in the National Firmament’ instead of Satellites to the great cities.”¹⁶⁶ MacRae also contacted Nolen concerning this new plan, and forwarded a copy of Bird’s letter, seeking support in promoting the Farm City project over other alternatives. MacRae invoked the name of Howard in seeking to enlist Nolen’s aid, writing that “I am sure, from conversations which I had with Mr. Ebenezer Howard when in Letchworth, that he would be even more keenly interested in a farm city program for America than he is in a plan for garden cities which would have for their purpose the centralizing of population of New York into Satellite cities.”¹⁶⁷ With his eye always trained on potential investors, MacRae concluded by noting that “It seems to me that we might think out a plan under which we could take advantage of Mr. Ebenezer Howard’s presence in this country and have him address important gatherings on the farm city idea, making an effective dual program for him which would have reciprocal [monetary] advantages.”¹⁶⁸
If MacRae expected Nolen, the consummate professional planner, to denigrate the idea of building Garden Cities outside of New York, he was sadly mistaken. At MacRae’s urging, Nolen wrote Bird, but only to state that “We should make use of Ebenezer Howard while he is in this country, especially in connection with the Farm City project.” In classic Nolen style, however, with his eye always open for planning opportunities, he hastened to add that “I shall be glad to know more of the plan of the Federated Civic Societies and their scheme for building a model town. Perhaps we can meet and talk things over some time.”

No investment capital flowed to the Farm City project as a result of Howard’s visit to the United States. In fact, work on Radburn, New Jersey, located just outside of New York City and billed as “America’s first Garden City,” commenced a few years after Howard’s visit, garnering investment money and attention while the Farm City project faded from view. As Nolen wrote MacRae in 1926, “About every so often the Farm City idea jumps up in my mind, and I wonder what is happening to the Association we formed in New York last winter. Has anything definite been done? What are the prospects for action?”

MacRae responded evasively a week later, remarking on a “recent visit of a Committee . . . to visit the Southern States and determine whether the conditions were such that these States should be included in the National Reclamation policy.” MacRae noted that “Dr. Elwood Mead went with the party, as of course the proposition really emenated (sic) from him.” MacRae added almost plaintively that “I think you are a strong believer in the fact that the proper kind of land settlement can do for agriculture what Letchworth is doing for industry, that is.
through the development of scientifically planned activities, [to] make the social as well as the economic life, well worth while."\textsuperscript{171}

A year and a half later, Nolen again wrote MacRae that "It seems a long time since I heard from you and I am wondering what progress, if any, has been made with the various things connected with planning with which you are associated. Has there been any stir in the Wilmington City planning or with the Farm City?"\textsuperscript{172} MacRae, in his response to Nolen, finally had to admit defeat, writing "As to the Farm city, as a private enterprise, we have been unable to discover any "patriotic capital."\textsuperscript{173}

MacRae was still active in 1927, however, promoting land reclamation and colonization activities in the South. As Tindall notes, "In December, 1927, Mead assembled delegates [including MacRae] from nine Southern states in a conference at Washington to endorse the scheme. The group sponsored a bill to set up in each of twelve Southern states one organized rural community of at least two hundred families. It never came to a vote, but the concept of organized rural communities aroused widespread discussion and support. It prepared the way for New Deal rural community experiments within a few years."\textsuperscript{174}

In fact, with the Great Depression the Farm City project was given new life, though in a considerably altered form. With the coming of the New Deal, MacRae was consulted on the structure and program for the new Division of Subsistence Homesteads. Given his clout, Conkin notes that MacRae "fairly easily secured the approval of the division for a $1,000,000 farm colony on part of his land in Pender County [North Carolina]. This, the first approved farm colony, was intended to solve the problems of stranded and submarginal farmers and of landless tenant farmers."\textsuperscript{175}
John Nolen, also a consultant with the Division, was called in to revise his Farm City plan, which evolved into Penderlea Homesteads and included 10 acre farms for a community of 300 families. Nolen was able to retain some of the character of the original plan. As Conkin notes, “The most carefully planned of all the rural colonies, Penderlea was laid out around a central community center. With the land already forested, the houses and roadsides were to remain shaded. The creek and drainage areas were also to remain forested and were to be used as parks. Most of the small, ten-acre farm plots faced on a road in front and a forest belt and creek or ditch in the rear.”

In 1934, with the development of Penderlea and other homestead projects floundering, the control of all the projects was transferred from the local corporation to the federal government. With that transfer of control, MacRae’s influence waned. The plan for Penderlea was significantly altered, buoyed by the belief by many that a ten-acre farm was untenable. Penderlea was replanned into 150 lots of around twenty acres each, and, with the project put under the control of the Resettlement Administration in May 1935, the plan was put into effect. Conkin writes that “By December 15, 1935, the Resettlement Administration had completed plans for 142 units of twenty acres each at Penderlea. With a work force of up to 1,800 relief laborers, the Resettlement Administration completed the 142 houses by September, 1936.” Conkin adds that

The houses were of one story without basements, had four to six rooms, contained baths and screened porches, and were heated by fireplaces.” Eventually “the community center was developed, with its thirty-one-room, consolidated county school, which contained a community library, craft, music, and band rooms, a special auditorium, a large gymnasium, a social and home economics building, a shop, and a school-bus garage. Also in the community center were the administration building, the community building, a health clinic, a home for teachers, a potato-curing house, a cane-syrup mill, a cannery, a cooperative store, a large warehouse, a gristmill, a grading house, and a furniture shop.”
With the implementation of this plan, the tract on which MacRae had envisioned the creation of a great New South Garden City was subdivided into small farms and sold to farmers on generous credit terms. Though the dream of creating a Garden City in eastern North Carolina was completely abandoned, the site became a productive agricultural community, providing a new and fresh start for over a hundred families. Though Howard would certainly not have recognized Penderlea Homesteads as a Garden City, and the aesthetics of Penderlea have little in common with the ideals of the City Beautiful, a tightly knit community of hard working farm families was created in the wake of America’s greatest economic disaster. MacRae could be proud of the community that finally emerged from his vision.

"The Enterprise Represents a Significant Advance in Planning"

While Nolen labored on the Farm City project in the early 1920s, he was also busy on numerous planning projects in Florida. Florida in the early decades of the 1900s saw a land boom that drew speculators from around the country with impressive schemes. As the National Resources Committee report of 1939 noted wryly, “The Florida boom resulted in the birth of a number of new towns, many of which were well planned and a few of which have materialized. Most of them are interesting in their conception but were planned purely for speculative profits.”

Examining the forces at work in the land boom, the report added “The inevitable result indicates the need for basing large-scale urban development on something in addition to climate and recreation.” The authors were taken aback at the scale of Florida’s boom, noting that “Since relatively few persons in the United States can afford a winter home in Florida without actively supporting it financially by earnings either in
some other part of the country or in Florida, the number of families planned for, without local means of livelihood, is remarkably large. Over 200,000 acres were contemplated in the proposed developments for urban and rural use studied for this report. Moreover, this represents only a small percentage of the total acreage in Florida at that time speculatively planned for residence.  

John Nolen was actively involved in numerous planning projects related to the speculative boom sweeping over Florida. These included the community of Belleair, located near Clearwater on the Gulf Coast, as well as Venice, also on the Gulf Coast. Planned in 1924, Belleair was essentially developed as a resort community intended to capitalize on surging demand for Gulf Coast property in southern Florida. Likewise Venice, planned in 1926, was largely designed as a resort city, developed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers as a scheme to rebuild their dwindling finances.  

Neither of these projects drew on the tradition of the New South Garden City. Clewiston, however, was one Florida community that did draw upon the model which first appeared in the plan for North Charleston and further evolved with the plans for Kingsport and Farm City. Clewiston represents an attempt to build a New South Garden City on the shore of Lake Okeechobee, at the edge of America’s greatest wetland, the Florida Everglades.  

Clewiston was not intended to be a speculative retirement venture like so many other Florida developments. Instead, it was planned to be the agricultural and industrial center of central southern Florida. From its inception, then, Clewiston was planned as a fully functioning city, not a winter resort or retirement community, though those aspects
of the new city were not ignored. As the National Resources Committee noted in its report, "Clewiston is perhaps the most interesting attempt to combine the climatic attractions with business and industrial enterprise. . . ." The report added, however, that in Clewiston "it is plainly evident that business and industry, rather than the climate have been the controlling factor in such limited development of the town as has actually occurred to date."181

The planning for Clewiston began in earnest in 1922. "Captain" John J. O'Brien, a financier and real estate investor from Philadelphia who spent considerable time in south Florida, and A. C. Clewis, a Tampa banker, initiated the development of Clewiston. The first step was to extend the Atlantic Coast Line railroad from nearby Moore Haven to the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee. At that point the developers established the town of Clewiston, and began the search for a planner to design their creation. Nolen's work was well known among Progressive Era business boosters of south Florida, particularly for his involvement in a comprehensive planning effort for West Palm Beach. In fact, the West Palm Beach plan was the impetus for his 1921 swing through the South, which included stops in Charleston and Greenville.

Nolen's involvement with the plan for Clewiston began on June 22, 1922, with a meeting in New York City with Alfred H. Wagg, president of the American National Bank of West Palm Beach (Figure 6.5). Though Captain O'Brien was the visionary for Clewiston and was intimately involved in the project, the implementation of the plan fell to Wagg. After the June 22 meeting, as was Nolen's style he quickly wrote Wagg, noting that "Since our meeting yesterday I have reflected on our discussion of Clewiston, and feel more and more confident that the opportunity is a quite unusual one,
and that the enterprise, properly directed, will represent a significant advance in city planning work in Florida.” Mindful that he was speaking to businessman interested in profits rather than the advancement of city planning, Nolen hastened to add that “It also should be a big business success from an investment point of view. I believe that when the planning of town sites is taken up early enough there is not conflict between the highest standards and the largest financial returns.”182

After extensive negotiations, Nolen entered into a contract on November 6, 1922 with the Clewiston Development Company, represented by O’Brien and Wagg as well as West Palm Beach businessman D. F. Dunkle and attorney Bert Winters, both directors of the American National Bank.183 The focus of the development of Clewiston shifted from the Gulf Coast city of Tampa to the Atlantic Coast city of West Palm.
Beach. This shift was in all likelihood related to a push by New South boosters of West
Palm Beach to develop the city’s hinterland. Much like the boosters of Charleston, who
looked at the new city of North Charleston as a mechanism for developing the city’s
hinterland, the developers of Clewiston looked at the resource rich Florida interior and
sought a plan to develop those resources and direct the flow of goods through the port
of West Palm Beach. The site of Clewiston was forty miles from the city, but was
connected to the coast by a major paved roadway. Additionally, they proposed building
a railroad connection to the site. Thus, Clewiston could function as a gateway to the
resources of the interior as well as an initial processing center for goods to be
transshipped through the growing port of West Palm Beach.

The site of Clewiston chosen by the developers lent itself to the creation of a
city. The transportation opportunities offered by the site were extensive. In a report to
the Clewiston Development Company probably written in 1922, Nolen summarized in
brief statements the connections between Clewiston and the surrounding area: “Present
railroad facilities, Atlantic Coast Line direct route north. Proposed railroads, West
Palm Beach to Arcadia Railroad, with deep water connections at W[est] P[alm]
B[each], and intersecting the Florida East coast, the Atlantic Coast Line at Clewiston,
and touching the Seaboard Line at Arcadia.” Nolen added that “Clewiston [is] the
halfway point on this railroad.” Plans for future railroad building also pointed to the
centrality of Clewiston, as Nolen noted that “Miami now planning direct railroad up
Miami canal to connect at Clewiston.” Nolen assured the developers that “The active
cooperation of the Railroads is assured,” since “The [Clewiston] Development people
are closely identified with the different companies.”184

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Also pointing to site advantages for creating a city was the promise of, in Nolen’s words, “splendid water traffic.” In a staccato report style, Nolen summarized the opportunities for water shipment that would come to Clewiston: “with the completion of the St. Lucia Canal (16 months), it will be possible to ship by boat direct from Clewiston to the Atlantic sea-board; with the completion of the W.P.B. railroad deep water connections at West Palm Beach; with the completion of the Miami Canal another water route to the Coast.” Nolen added that “Clewiston is directly on the shores of the Lake, with a deep, wide ship channel leading out to deep water, with ample railroad and dock facilities already constructed.” Anticipating the diverse economic base Nolen believed would come with the creation of the new city, Nolen noted that “There are many islands in the Lake, approximately 1,500 acres, the best fruit and vegetable land in the country, and they will always ship by water.”

As for roads, Clewiston was also well situated. Nolen wrote that Clewiston was “the halfway point on the West Palm Beach to Fort Myers (Gulf to Atlantic Highway) paved road.” Nolen further noted that “This road will be an 18’ macadam road of the finest quality, and the only means of crossing the State of Florida, by auto, south of Sebring. . . .” Moreover, the site represented “the terminus of the Scenic Highway, extending from Sebring south through the Highlands, Glades and Lee Counties. This road will connect at Clewiston with the Atlantic to Gulf Highway, and be the best route north into the central portion of the State. It is a 16’ hard surface road, oiled.”

As for agricultural resources, the area surrounding the site of Clewiston offered tremendous opportunity. As Nolen noted in his preliminary report to the developers, the area was “Especially adapted to general farming, especially corn, milo maize,
broom corn, alfalfa hay, and all manner of forage of every sort and description in unheard of quantities.” In addition, Nolen wrote that “Islands in Lake especially protected against frost most valuable trucking farms in the State, land closely bordering the Lake likewise protected and likewise peculiarly adapted for the raising of high priced winter vegetables.” Other agricultural products Nolen predicted would do well included fruit growing, of which there were “Already over 1000 acres planted to Avocado... and Hayden Mangoes. This district peculiarly adapted to commercial groves of avocados.” Nolen predicted that the area, “with irrigation (which is practical and cheap) will be one of the great sections for raising strawberries and celery.”

The most significant crop for the area, however, was sugar cane. Though the developers of Clewiston, as well as all the boosters of south Florida, were well aware of the coming sugar boom, Nolen reminded O’Brien and Wagg that “This section pronounced by experts to be the greatest sugar growing section in the world. Cane will grow for years without re-planting, yielding from 40 to 60 tons per acre, with high sugar content, and with a grinding season of over 6 months.”

In terms of size, population, form, function, and control, the plan for the new city on this site was clearly based on principles associated with the New South Garden City. And though not all of the plans of the developers were realized at Clewiston, a new city was created on Lake Okeechobee which incorporated both agricultural and industrial activities. Ebenezer Howard might not have approved of all the elements of the plan, but he would have recognized it as inspired by his work, though modified to fit the unique characteristics of the New South, and particularly the New South of Florida.
The size of the site for Clewiston included about 2,500 acres, which was in line with North Charleston and Kingsport. As Nolen summarized to the developers in a preliminary description of the project, “Total of 2,500 acres; about 1,000 acres in town site and 1,500 in small plats surrounding, laid out for agricultural purposes.” Though the agricultural area was smaller than that planned for North Charleston or Farm City, it was not far out of line for the plans for those cities. In terms of scale, then, Clewiston was an ambitious project clearly on a par with other New South Garden City projects.

As to population, Nolen projected a population in line with other New South Garden Cities. He estimated that the population after five years of development would be 1,000, and after twenty years would be 10,000. The total planned population for the new city, however, was 30,000, which was exactly in line with the plan for North Charleston as well as Howard’s Garden City. Nolen projected rather slow growth for the city, apparently not wanting to present too ambitious a growth plan to the developers. By 1922, Nolen had observed developments at other New South projects, including North Charleston and Kingsport, and may have felt it necessary to be more conservative and less boosterish in his projections. Still, the 10,000 population figure fits well with the growth of comparable New South Garden Cities.

Unlike Kingsport, there was no flawed town plan created by engineers with which Nolen had to struggle, and unlike Farm City, a full-blown plan for Clewiston was completely worked out by Nolen. While the purpose of the city was clearly based on Howard’s Garden City principles, the plan for Clewiston was largely drawn from City Beautiful aesthetics, with its arcing streets and slashing diagonals focused on a “Civic
Center.’’ Though the developers altered Nolen’s design, the fundamental morphology planned by Nolen in 1922 was incorporated into the new city as it developed.

At Clewiston, Nolen had a physical feature that he had not worked with in his previous projects in the South, and that was an extensive and undeveloped lakefront. Lake Okeechobee was the largest lake in the southern United States, measuring roughly 40 miles long and 25 miles wide. Despite its relative shallowness, only reaching a maximum depth of 20 feet, the lake represented an extraordinary focus of development for O’Brien and a rare planning opportunity for Nolen. Nolen took full advantage of this opportunity, designing an extensive waterfront park that ran nearly the length of the city. Moreover, included in the lake front plans were two docks, one for commercial shipping activities and a second for recreation activities, which incorporated a yacht basin.

In addition to the park, the waterfront area incorporated a “Tourist Hotel,” a “Hospital Group,” and a large residential section. The Tourist Hotel was situated to face onto the recreational dock, forming a central focus for the waterfront area. The plan was undoubtedly that rich visitors to Clewiston would leave their pleasure boats in the yacht basin and spend time and money in the Tourist Hotel.

In Nolen’s plan, the center of the new city was the retail business district. The business district was laid out in a grid, centered on a broad landscaped boulevard. This four-block boulevard terminated to the north at the “Civic Center” and to the south at the railroad station and a public plaza. Across the railroad tracks was a large semicircular park which connected the retail district with the “Country Club.” The retail district situated between the railroad station and the “Civic Center” consisted of
sixteen blocks of commercial space, with the blocks cut by alleyways much as at North Charleston and Kingsport. The “Civic Center,” which faced onto the state road that ran through the heart of the city, was linked to the “Tourist Hotel,” and thus the waterfront, by a broad avenue.

Conceptually, then, the plan of Clewiston contains a much stronger focus than that of Kingsport, Nolen’s other fully designed New South Garden City. The central axis of the city connects, in a north-south direction, the waterfront with the “Tourist Hotel,” the “Civic Center,” the retail district, the railroad station, and the “Country Club.” This elegant plan, firmly based in principles associated with the Progressive Era’s City Beautiful design aesthetic, nicely connects the two essential modes of transportation upon which the city was to be based, water and rail, and provides a visual and conceptual link that binds the new city together.

A secondary axis was created for the new city as well. This axis was formed around the connection by a landscaped boulevard of the “Hospital Group,” located on the waterfront, and the “High School,” which fronted on a plaza space. From the “High School” and plaza area radiated broad diagonals, one of which linked this node with the “Civic Center.” A second diagonal connected to the state road that ran through the heart of the city.

Interestingly, outside of the broad diagonals, the plan for Clewiston was largely based on a grid pattern. The only curvilinear streets in the plan were the three arcing streets, reminiscent of Nolen’s plan for Kingsport, which pass to the north of the “Civic Center.” These streets were part of the “First Residential Section,” which was intended to be a middle class residential area in the new city.

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To the east and west of the retail business district were situated residential areas designed on a grid pattern. The area to the east also incorporated a “Wholesale Business” district which consisted of twelve blocks cut by broad alleyways designed for truck traffic. This area was essentially to be the city’s warehouse district, though Nolen chose to position it close to the center of town.

Outside of this urban area were the districts reserved for “Small Farms.” These farms were intended to be between five and ten acres, with some larger farms further from the town site between 20 and 80 acres. Much as at Farm City, the developers of Clewiston not only intended to utilize the region’s agricultural resources but also to tightly weave agricultural activities into the fabric of the new city. There also may have been given some thought by the developers to designate areas that they hoped would one day become part of the urban area of Clewiston as farmland, essentially holding it in reserve without going to the expense of actually platting the lots at the time of development.

Like North Charleston, the morphology of Clewiston was seriously effected by the presence of the railroad. This created a challenge for Nolen but tremendous economic opportunities for the developers. The rail line, which entered the city from the south and exited to the north, cut an east-west line directly through the new city. The developers also required a spur line be added to connect the main rail line with the waterfront at the commercial dock. Along this spur line Nolen placed the extensive “Industrial Section” of the new city.

The rail lines thus girdled Clewiston even more than they girdled North Charleston, essentially creating an “inside city” and an “outside city.” The inside city
incorporated the sections for “Retail Business” and “Wholesale Business,” the “Tourist Hotel,” the “Hospital Group,” and the “First Residential Section,” as well as an area of “Small Farms.” The outside city included the “Industrial Section,” the “Railroad Yard, the “Country Club,” and most of the “Small Farms” as well as the “Negro Section.” Apparently few connections were planned between the inside and outside city, the most notable exception the link between the “Retail Business” district and the “Country Club,” designed to ensure that visitors at the “Tourist Hotel” as well as residents of the “First Residential Section” could easily make their way to this amenity. There were few connections planned between the “Negro Section” or the “Industrial Section” and the inside city.

Progress on completing the design of Clewiston proceeded rapidly. In January 1923, Nolen wrote Wagg that “We are completing the preliminary plan. It will be an accurate drawing showing all streets, railroad developments, canals, warehouses, dike system, the waterfront development, parks, athletic fields, the country club, industrial section, sites for schools, churches, etc., and civic center.”192 In the preliminary planning stage of Clewiston, Nolen appeared to be more mindful of land use regulations than in the planning of Kingsport, noting that the preliminary plan “will also include by its arrangement an indication of the essential zoning of Clewiston giving approximate locations of retail and wholesale districts, tourist’s hotels, industrial and negro sections, various residential locations, small farms, etc.”193

Though the preliminary plan for Clewiston met with general approval from O’Brien and Wagg, the morphology of the new city was not without contention. As Wagg informed Nolen after receiving the preliminary plan, “Captain O’Brien came in
from Clewiston Saturday and we had considerable conference over the map. The only change we find necessary is as follows: Eliminate the railroad extension and yards from the lake spur East and in their stead give a 200 foot right of way for yards and tracks from the main line to the South limits of the property, separating the negro small farms from the Country Club district." Wagg acknowledged that "This will make necessary certain street changes in the negro section and in the Country Club District. These, however, we prefer to leave to your best judgment, rather than confuse you by any definite suggestions." 

Nolen incorporated the requested changes into the morphology of the city. In forwarding the revised Preliminary Plan to Wagg in March 1923, Nolen noted that "We would rather see the railroad location run straight through the town on the east and west line with the change in direction made in the open country as originally planned. However, this new location... is fairly well out of the way and has been worked out with comparatively little disturbance of the street and block system." Nolen, mindful of the growing spatial distance between the races in the American South, added that the change to the rail line "of course, also accomplishes another purpose which you undoubtedly had in mind, of forming a barrier between the negro district and the Country Club." 

It was not until July 1923 that the plan sent to the Clewiston Development Company was given scrutiny by O'Brien and Wagg. The revised Preliminary Plan received general approval, though there were several requested changes to the morphology of the plan. As Wagg wrote Nolen, "When Captain O'Brien was in the
city a few days ago, we had a conference for the consideration of the last map submitted by you, and I have been instructed to make the following suggestions..."198

One of the issues troubling O'Brien and Wagg was the amount of park space planned for the city. As Wagg wrote Nolen, "We wish to plat in lots the four blocks shown as park property west of the commercial pier. In our judgment, the lake front, which is reserved for park purposes, the entire length of the city with the exception of three small blocks of the colored district, is more than sufficient park area, and the particular blocks above mentioned are so located as to be in demand and available for immediate commercial development..."199 Moreover, O'Brien and Wagg, with their eyes trained on financial returns from the new city, noted that "in our opinion these blocks could be made slightly larger, and the streets rearranged at this point without materially injuring the layout, at the same time giving us more property of immediate value."200

Other changes were less dramatic. One of these involved a canal which the developers hoped to place through the center of the city, and Nolen, obviously at their behest, had shown on the plan. As Wagg wrote, "The canal paralleling the Cross State Highway through the property and emptying into Lake Okeechobee at the existing dock is, of course, still only proposed. While we will be in a position to exert considerable influence in the matter, the final determination as to whether or not the canal will be constructed, will not rest with us. We feel therefore that this canal should not be shown on our map."201

There were also changes of lot size, configurations, and proposed land uses. The developers requested changes in the lot sizes in the industrial districts, commercial
districts, and in the area set aside for African Americans. In addition, O'Brien and Wagg requested that the label “Small Farms” be removed from a tract in the area inside the railroad tracts, noting that “We would prefer not to have this title on the map.”

Though Wagg stated that “It is our intention that this property be sold in blocks, so that it can be used for small farms,” he and O'Brien felt it necessary to look to a more urban future for Clewiston, noting that “As desired later on when the city grows, these small farms can be adapted to city blocks and will be in entire harmony with the balance of the plan. . . .”

Anxious to move on to other projects, Nolen and his associates moved quickly to make the requested changes to the city’s form. Nolen was in Gothenburg, Sweden for the International Town Planning Conference during this period, and wrote Wagg “I shall have to leave the details for [associate] Mr. Foster to work out and write you further when we learn just how they do work out.” Nolen’s associate Philip W. Foster made the changes quickly, and wrote Wagg in late July that “In regard to the changes in the plan as outlined in the letter of July 14th, we have given these careful consideration, and have completed the restudy.” Nolen’s associate added that “These changes have all worked out in a satisfactory manner and we feel that you will be pleased with the results.”

Despite changes made by the developers searching for larger profits, the final plan created by Nolen for the city of Clewiston was aesthetically pleasing and, in many ways, wonderfully elegant. The plan included numerous park and plaza sites throughout as well as school sites, churches, and an athletic field. Nolen was clearly interested in providing amenities throughout the city, and his plan generally
accomplished that goal. The plan for Clewiston, with its parks, plazas, landscaped boulevards, diagonal and arcing streets, was based on the Progressive Era planning traditions that were derived from Garden City and City Beautiful principles. Moreover, with the weaving together of agricultural and industrial spaces within an urban framework, the form of Clewiston was firmly situated in the morphological tradition of the New South Garden City.

In terms of functionality, Clewiston was planned as a fully functioning city, with both industrial and agricultural sectors. Moreover, the plan for Clewiston included both retail and wholesale functions. When combined with the parks, plazas, churches, schools, hospitals, hotels, and country club that were incorporated into the plan, it becomes clear that Nolen was designing a full blown, multifunctional city.

The agricultural possibilities of the area were well known, including sugar cane cultivation as well as growing of fruits and vegetable for distant northern markets. For the industrial sector of Clewiston, Nolen envisioned many possibilities. As he noted in his report to the developers, the possibilities included “Fish for canning factories, etc.; Rock for quarries, building purposes, etc.; Peanuts, for Peanut oil mills; Forage of all kinds; Grain for Elevators; Muck, for Fertilizer factory; Sugar Cane for Sugar mill, syrup factories, etc.; Vegetables for canning factories.” Other possibilities noted by Nolen included lumber yards and sawmills, shipyards, machine shops, and possibly even oil process since “many people expect oil to be found in Florida.”

With agricultural and industrial activities woven into the plan, along with retail and wholesale operations, Clewiston was planned as a dynamic urban center. Moreover, Nolen envisioned the city of Clewiston taking on a wide variety of roles. As
he noted in his report, “Clewiston will be the logical distributing center for a section 30 miles square. It will not only be a farming center, but the financial center of the Everglades.” Searching for even more functions, Nolen added that Clewiston “Should be developed into a great winter resort, with its natural advantages in transportation, fishing, hunting, yachting, proximity to both coasts, etc.”

The combination of industrial and agricultural activities, as well as other functions in the fabric of the plan, places Clewiston in the tradition of the New South Garden City. With its well designed residential sections and numerous amenities, and the tight bond between the industrial and agricultural sectors, the plan for Clewiston in many ways marks a significant step forward in the evolution of the model of the New South Garden City. As with everything in rapidly growing south Florida in the early decades of the 1900s, the planning tradition of the New South Garden City surfaces in probably its boldest and most ambitious form in this plan to reshape the urban landscape.

As to control, Clewiston also drew on the traditions of the New South Garden City. The structures of class, race, ownership, and governance in Clewiston were very similar to that of North Charleston and Kingsport. By the time Nolen began planning Clewiston, he had considerable experience working in the New South, not only at Kingsport and Farm City but also at the residential subdivision of Myer’s Park outside of Charlotte. While working on these projects he had developed a keen understanding of the issues and constraints in planning in the New South.

In terms of class, the dramatic class structure of North Charleston, with its juxtaposition of the elite subdivision of Pinewood Park and the crowded working class
area of Noisette Creek, was hinted at in the plans for Clewiston. Though O'Brien and Wagg were less voluble in their descriptions of the class differentiation of Clewiston and of the control over the lower classes embodied in class separation than was Rhett in his vision of North Charleston, it is possible to glean an understanding of the class structure of the city as inscribed into the plan by Nolen. Some of the class structure of the new city is clearly incorporated into the plan, but some must be inferred from Nolen's placement of activities and areas in proximity.

Based on lot sizes and proximity to amenities, a class structure can be discerned. The elite residential district planned for Clewiston was undoubtedly the area surrounding the “Country Club.” The lots in this area were roughly comparable to the lots planned for Pinewood Park, suggesting that this was to be the premier residential section of the new city. As for a middle class residential area, the area labeled “First Residential District” which included medium sized lots was intended for that class. The major amenity for this district was the waterfront park, though additional open spaces, including the “Civic Center,” plazas, and school and church sites contributed to the district’s charm. Other indicators of the class structure for this district include the presence of the “Tourist Hotel,” which the developers would never have surrounded with a less than middle class area, and the “Hospital Group.”

It was also clear from the plan where the African American working population was to be situated, clearly labeled as the “Negro Section.” What was less clear was the location of the white working class in the city of Clewiston. Given that the residential lots outside of the Country Club district were virtually equal in size, it becomes more difficult to discern the positionality of the working class in the new city. Clearly,
however, a white working class was required, and in all likelihood was intended to be situated in the residential districts abutting the “Retail Business” and “Wholesale Business” districts. These districts included fewer amenities than the “First Residential Section,” though there were school sites located in the areas, a possible indication that there was a desire to keep the children of the working population from mixing with those of the upper and middle classes. Moreover, the residential district adjacent to the “Wholesale Business” zone was essentially situated between the warehouse district and the railroad yard, a situation hardly conducive to middle class sensibilities.

Thus there was a class structure to Clewiston. The classes were, in fact, divided by significant barriers. The elite “Country Club” district was separated from the working class neighborhood by the rail lines. In turn, the working class section was in separated from the middle class “First Residential Section” by the broad right-of-way designated for the state highway that passed through Clewiston. Indeed, in the initial plan there was a canal planned for that right-of-way as well, which would have had the effect of further dividing the city by class.

No group, however, was more separated within the fabric of Nolen’s plan for Clewiston than the African American population. Clearly, just as there was a class structure to the new city, there was also a racial structure, in which the black population was firmly segregated from the white population in an effort to provide control over this segment of society. The racial structure of Clewiston was cut from the same cloth as that of other New South Garden Cities, replicating in south Florida the racial divisions that were emerging throughout the American South.
As Nolen was drawing his preliminary plans for Clewiston in January 1923, he was already establishing a “Negro Section.” This was obviously at the behest of O’Brien and Wagg, but Nolen’s reaction to this segregation is unclear. By the early 1920s it was becoming clear that, in terms of legality, racial zoning was on shaky ground, though cities in the South pushed forward with attempts to inscribe residential segregation into legal codes and thus onto the landscape. Sensitive to the legal challenges to residential segregation, but also sensitive to the wishes of New South progressive businessmen to segregate the races, Nolen broadly cautioned Wagg that “The question of Racial Zoning is an important one not only for established cities like West Palm Beach, but also for Clewiston as it effects the character of deeds.”

Despite these words of caution, which seemed to hint that racial restrictions incorporated into real estate deeds might make the deeds legally suspect, the planning for Clewiston proceeded with its “Negro Section.” The agricultural and industrial vision for Clewiston, with many of the planned industries worked largely by African Americans in the South, such as sugar processing, vegetable canning, fish processing, and sawmilling, required the presence of an African American population that would need to be treated with a measure of respect even as it was separated and controlled. As Nolen noted in his preliminary report to the developers, “There should be provision made for large colored section in town.” Nolen, however, did not envision African Americans as farmers in Clewiston, adding that there was “No necessity of colored section in farming sections.”

In laying out Clewiston’s “Negro Section,” Nolen drew from the City Beautiful aesthetic to provide a generally pleasing design to the district. Distinctly separated from
the balance of Clewiston by the right-of-way dedicated to the railroad, the “Negro Section” was intended to stand as a separate community within the urban fabric of Clewiston. The “Negro Section” was planned on a grid pattern and centered on a circular park, from which four avenues radiated. Facing onto this central park was a church and a “Community Building.” Extending towards the waterfront from the central park was the “Store Center,” which included substantial retail space for the African American population.

The plan for the “Negro Section” also included several amenities, including a grade school and a large park near the lakefront. In addition to the park, the waterfront included a public dock, fronting on which were two additional blocks of commercial space. The public dock may have been intended to provide an opportunity for the African American population to keep small boats and supplement their diet by fishing in the waters of Lake Okeechobee. The small retail spaces planned along the docks were probably intended to take advantage of fish and other products taken from the lake and its environs.

The “Negro Section” of Clewiston was adjacent to the “Industrial Section,” which is an indicator of the labor intensive industries envisioned for the new city. The commercial wharf was also situated in this section, and included a short canal designed to bring in transshipped goods for further processing and shipment. The “Negro Section” and the “Industrial Section” were separated from the bulk of Clewiston, both in terms of spatiality and purpose.

In addition to the urban “Negro Section,” and despite Nolen’s belief that there was “no necessity” for provision of an African American farm section, the developers
allowed for substantial space dedicated to "Negroes Small Farms." This area also included a church and a school facing onto a small central park which would have provided a focus to the farming community. The area of "Negroes Small Farms" was separated from the elite "Country Club" district by the broad railroad right-of-way, and though there was one road connection between the two very different districts, the separation between the districts was almost complete.

Interestingly, with the opportunity to become storeowners or successful farmers, there was the implication in Clewiston of class divisions within the African American community. A middle class would likely emerge from the retail owning class, while an elite might well have emerged associated with more successful farming opportunities. Unlike North Charleston and Kingsport, where opportunities were limited, based on the plan for the new city some in the African American community at Clewiston could become very successful and accumulate wealth and status, possibly even spilling over into the larger city.

The plan for the "Negro Section," however, was not without contention. With regards to Nolen's Preliminary Plan for Clewiston, produced in March 1923, Wagg noted several problems that Captain O'Brien had with the plan for the African American area. As Wagg wrote Nolen, "In the negro and industrial district if is our judgment that you have allowed too large lots. The average lot in a negro development in this part of the country is not over 25 x 80. In our judgment the lots in the negro district should be made to conform as near as possible with this unit." That this would essentially create a zone for "shotgun houses" does not seem to have concerned
the developers. Further, Wagg added that "Certainly the negro lots on the ridge [above the lake] should at no place be larger than 50 x 100."\textsuperscript{215}

In addition, Wagg informed Nolen that O’Brien believed that "the store sites fronting the public docks should be 100 feet deep, instead of the 120 feet, and that the alley in their rear should be widened from 20 to 40 feet."\textsuperscript{216} Wagg informed Nolen that when this was accomplished, "The blocks immediately in the rear of that alley should be divided into two tiers of lots, each 80 feet deep. One tier fronting on the 40 foot alley, and the other tier fronting on Surf Street."\textsuperscript{217} That this change created residential lots for African Americans fronting on an alleyway, a situation that would never have been tolerated for a white community planned utilizing Progressive Era planning principles, does not seem to have given the developers or Nolen pause.

More telling of the underlying attitude of the developers was the conclusion that "The negro park on the lake front is in our judgment too large to use exclusively for that purpose. In our judgment an area of approximately 60% of the present proposal would be sufficient. . . ."\textsuperscript{218} Moreover, O’Brien and Wagg believed that "in addition to being used for a park, this property could be also used for the negro school," freeing up property in the heart of the "Negro Section" for residential lots. Looking to further consolidate the planned amenities for the black community, Wagg added that "The negro schoolhouse [should] be . . . used temporarily as their community headquarters."\textsuperscript{219}

None of these changes appeared to give Nolen any concern. As his associate Foster noted in responding to Wagg’s concerns, “In the negro district on the ridge we have changed the streets to reduce the size of blocks and have thus produced a much

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larger number of saleable lots.” Foster added that “Quite a number of these have been
laid out 50 ft. x 80 ft. and the remainder approximately 50 ft. x 100 ft. We have not
shown 25 ft. lots except in the store areas as it makes a very complicated plan at this
scale. The same result can be obtained by selling half lots.” Foster also noted that “The
negro park on the lake front has been reduced in size and the streets extended and new
lots added.”

In terms of racial structure, the plan for Clewiston incorporated the African
American population, albeit in a highly segregated fashion. The treatment, however, of
African Americans in the plan for Clewiston was drawn more from the model applied at
Kingsport than at North Charleston. It was clear to the developers of Clewiston that the
black population would play a crucial role in the success of the city, a fact that Rhett
and his associates appeared unwilling to fully accept. Nevertheless, the degree of
spatial segregation in Clewiston and the effort expended to ensure that there was as little
contact as possible between the races was part and parcel of the tradition of the New
South Garden City.

In terms of ownership and governance, Clewiston was very much in line with
other planned communities in the New South. The property was owned by the
Clewiston Development Company, and the principle visionary of the new city was
Captain O’Brien, president of the company. Curiously, the development was managed
by Wagg, in addition to his duties as president of the American National Bank. There
does not appear to have been an onsite manager, someone in the role that O’Hear played
at North Charleston. It is also interesting that O’Brien, as the major financier of the
project, does not appear as one of the Bank of America’s directors, as Montague did for

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Rhett's Peoples State Bank. Moreover, as at North Charleston, the ownership of the property, and thus the impetus for the project, was in local hands. Though O'Brien hailed from Philadelphia, he spent most of his time in south Florida.

The property at Clewiston was planned for sale. There was apparently no thought given to holding the property in some sort of communal organization which would then rent it, with the increases in rent going to benefit the community, as Howard would have it. The property, and thus control of the development, was intended to be transferred to the residents of the new city, whether farmers or urban dwellers. All of the new city’s amenities were intended to be transferred to the community as well, thus ensuring that at some point in time the Clewiston Development Company, having hopefully generated a handsome profit, would pass from the scene.

One interesting feature in the ownership structure of Clewiston was the apparent willingness of the developers to allow African Americans to purchase property in the new city. This was to be the case at Kingsport as well, suggesting that as the New South Garden City evolved from its first articulation at North Charleston there was a realization that “all money is green.” Moreover, in the Clewiston plan African Americans were apparently going to be able to own retail space and farm land, suggesting that the developers were willing to accept the notion of a black property owning class in the new city.

The initial governance of the development was, as at other New South Garden Cities, in the hands of a development company. Locations of economic and social activities and nodes were determined by the developers, as well as by Nolen in creating the plan. Early in the development of Clewiston, however, the company sought to
create a municipal entity that would take on functions reserved for the development company in other New South Garden Cities.

The passing of control is exemplified by the effort in March 1923, only six months into the planning process, to legally incorporate the city. As Wagg wrote Nolen, “Mr. Winters, our attorney, finds it necessary in preparing the charter for the town of Clewiston, which is to be presented at the coming session of the Legislature, to have some copies of your map.” A problem arose in the chartering process, requiring Wagg to inform Nolen that “The city boundaries as shown on your map do not conform with the actual outlines as provided for, in the Clewiston charter, which was passed by the Florida Legislature this Spring.” Wagg added that “I am writing Captain O’Brien to furnish you with the correct lines in order that these may be shown on your map.”

Early on, then, governance was intended to shift to the local community. The lots were planned for sale to residents, and these property owners would then largely control the pace of the city’s development. The eagerness of the developers to charter the city and sell the property was probably related to the sense of ephemerality of the Florida land boom of the 1920s, even by those in the midst of it. The eagerness to press forward with property sales to both white and black residents is palpable in Wagg’s missive to Nolen, stating that “You must realize that for considerable time the only property in the entire town site, which is available for immediate building and development is our ridge property and we must prepare to accommodate a comparatively large negro population immediately. We must therefore get as many of them on the ridge as possible, without of course jeopardizing their health, or the health of the city.” Though Wagg was justifying adding additional residential lots to the
"Negro Section," his larger concern was rapidly developing Clewiston in the face of the possibility, always lurking in the background, that the bubble might burst.

Thus in terms of size, population, form, function, and structure, Clewiston was clearly drawn from the tradition of the New South Garden City. New features were added to fit local circumstances, such as a tourist hotel, a yacht basin, a hospital, and a waterfront park. Nevertheless, the combination of industrial and agricultural activities places it squarely in the emerging tradition of city building in the New South based on Progressive Era planning principles associated with Ebenezer Howard's Garden City as well as the City Beautiful aesthetic.

The actual development of Clewiston proceeded in fits and starts, largely due to financial problems associated with the project. The developers had more will than wallet, which was typical of boosters and businessmen of the New South. Moreover, by 1923, the real estate boom in south Florida appeared to be drawing to a close. As Wagg wrote Nolen in November 1923 concerning progress on the new city, “I had a short conference with Captain O’Brien. . . . [and] we were. . . unable to arrive at a definite conclusion. The situation in the Glades is such as to make very uncertain the date that we will be able to start our active operations.”225 Wagg attempted to sound a hopeful note, however, adding that “We plan to get together within the next week or ten days and I will report the results of this conference to you.”226

An early indicator of the financial constraints facing the project were the negotiations involving Nolen’s fee for completing the plan for the new city. In June 1922, Nolen proposed a total fee of $7,500, to be paid on a schedule as the work was completed. The Clewiston Development Company found this contract schedule
unacceptable, and placed Nolen in the uncomfortable position of having to make extensive concessions. As he reminded Wagg in 1924, “In the discussion of that contract I manifested my interest in the matter by agreeing to all the concessions (some of them quite important) that you and the others asked for as to the area to be covered in the planning and the arrangements for payment, including the very unusual request that 50% of the total amount should not be payable until sixty days after the presentation of the final plan.” In addition to these concessions, Nolen reminded Wagg that “Furthermore, I joined in the enterprise heartily by accepting voluntarily shares of the stock of the First Bank of Clewiston with a par value of $500 as payment of my retaining fee for that amount.”

That John Nolen, America’s premier town planner, would go to any lengths to generate business for his firm was made clear by his willingness to accept worthless stock in a paper bank in lieu of hard cash for his retainer. Nevertheless, Nolen had made concessions that would plague him throughout the course of the project. As he wrote to Wagg in July 1923, as his associates were completing the final changes to the plan, “I am reenclosing the bill [for the final plan], as I trust it can be paid now. It is not a duplicate. We have finished the general plan from our point of view, and are now simply making revisions at your suggestion.” In order to make his point perfectly clear, Nolen added “In other words, the delay is to accommodate you, and not because our work is unfinished.” And as a not so subtle reminder of further bills that would be due, Nolen wrote Wagg that “I trust also that you will keep in mind that by the special arrangement to which I agreed, a very large per cent of the total cost of the work is being withheld.”

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Nolen billed the balance of the account in 1923, but no further money could be
squeezed from the Clewiston Development Company. By June 1924, Nolen's sense of
desperation concerning payment of the balance was growing. The $3,750 of
preliminary payment had been made, but the outstanding balance of another $3,750
represented a significant amount due to his firm. As he wrote to Wagg, "I want to write
you with utmost frankness about the preparation of the plans for Clewiston, the cost of
the work and the settlement for the same." Nolen, in an effort to remind Wagg of the
account, noted that "I enclose herewith a bill showing the times when payments were
made. Nothing has been paid since September 26, 1923, although the final plan was
submitted May 2, 1923, and therefore on July 1, 1923, a full year ago, the total amount
still due should have been paid."

Nolen pulled no punches in his effort to extract payment from O'Brien and
Wagg. He reminded Wagg that "During the year I have, as you know, written you from
time to time. In reply I have received friendly letters promising to give the matter early
attention and to send a remittance. . . . No money has been paid, however, since
September." Nolen noted that "The amount due is large--$3,750. Clewiston was one of
the important pieces of work to which we gave attention during 1923, and it is a serious
matter for us to carry an unpaid balance of $3,750 for over a year. Loss of interest
alone for the last year amounts to $225." Nolen put it bluntly to Wagg, "I am writing to
demand action."

Nolen in all probability was well aware of the financial difficulties facing the
company, as well as other developers in south Florida. He even proposed a schedule to
pay off the debt, noting that "I should like very much to have payment of the total sum.
If that is not practicable without serious inconvenience to you and the others responsible for the account, I would like to have the liquidation of the account provided for, within sixty days. . ."233

Somehow, between June and October of 1924, the account was paid off. This was in all likelihood in preparation for the sale of the Clewiston site, upon which little in the way of actual development had been accomplished, to a real estate investment firm headquartered in St. Louis. The sudden sale of the townsite might have been held up if the company was still carrying Nolen’s debt on its books. As Wagg tersely wrote Nolen in October 1924, “We have received an offer for the sale of Clewiston which has tentatively been accepted, there are however still some details to be determined and until the matter is actually closed there is always the possibility of a disagreement.”234 Wagg added that “We expect to include in the purchase price the transfer to them of all planning work completed to date and shall most certainly recommend that they continue the detail planning with you.”235

Nolen, however, as the consummate planning professional, had already contacted Isaac T. Cook of St. Louis, having read in the Manufacturers Record of the eminent sale of the Clewiston property. Cook replied to Nolen’s note, stating that “I beg to advise that Mr. J. J. O’Brien has shown me the plans you drew up for the townsite and they certainly are very attractive.”236 Cook hastened to add, however, that “at the present time we are not in a position to go ahead with this development but will keep you in mind and as soon as anything develops will be glad to let you hear from us.”237
Two weeks later, Cook replied to another letter from Nolen expressing interest in restarting the Clewiston project, writing that “we are closing a transaction for the purchase of the townsite of Clewiston, Florida with the agreement on the part of the sellers that we are to have the benefit of all services coming to them to this date, from you. I should like to know what you consider we are entitled to in this connection.”

Though Cook did not claim to be a planner, he nonetheless felt it necessary to add that “I am somewhat undecided as to whether or not you have the business section properly located [and] also whether the plan, in its full scope can be worked out in a practical way.”

Nolen replied that “The work which we were engaged to do by the Clewiston Development Company is completed. . . .” With his eye trained on future business, however, he quickly added that “When I say our work is completed, I of course do not mean to infer that there is no more planning to be done, but merely that the work that we were engaged to do under the contract is completed, it being confined to general planning.” Nolen left the door open for future planning work, informing Cook that “In order to put the project on the ground, it will be necessary to have certain engineering work done, which can probably be by a local man, and then, more detailed planning of the various parts of the project as executed.” Left unsaid was that Nolen’s firm would be the best qualified to coordinate these efforts to “put the project on the ground.”

As noted by Cook, the “full scope” of Clewiston was beyond the means of his real estate firm. The city which emerged from the development process bore some resemblance to the city envisioned by O’Brien and Wagg and designed by Nolen,
though the agricultural aspects of the plan were largely abandoned. Other aspects were abandoned as well in the construction process, including the waterfront park, the country club, and many of the park sites. And with the much more limited industrial sector which emerged, the need for African American workers was much less than planned by O'Brien and Wagg, obviating the need for the large African American area incorporated in the Nolen plan.

Despite the shortcomings of the city as it developed, the plan for Clewiston, with its diverse residential districts, retail and wholesale business areas, plazas, parks, schools, churches, and other amenities, stands as a significant achievement in the New South Garden City tradition. The plan bound together the agricultural possibilities of south Florida with a vibrant industrial sector that, if developed as planned, would have created what Nolen foresaw, the “financial center of the Everglades.” The efforts of O’Brien and Wagg to reshape the industrial and agricultural fabric of south Florida by creating a New South Garden City was not fully realized, yet the ambitious plans for Clewiston are a testament to the efforts of New South boosters to create a new urban future in the American South.

“The Best Textile Community in the South”

In the mid-1920s, with the plans for Clewiston on hold and MacRae unable to secure financing for his Farm city project, the dream of creating the New South Garden City evaporated. After Clewiston, Nolen’s work in the South began to draw to a close. Projects such as Venice would still command his attention, but no new large city planning projects emerged. As the South’s agricultural economy stumbled, the notion of New South boosters embarking on large-scale city building efforts became untenable.
Grand visions of a new urban future, such as those expressed at North Charleston, Kingsport, New Holland, Farm City, and Clewiston were eclipsed by a struggle for economic survival, as the South’s economy stumbled into depression and the nation lurched towards the crash of October 1929.

As the vision of creating the New South Garden City faded in the 1920s, there remained one area of planning activity in the South that still attracted attention. Southern mill villages, which were the predominant planned urban form of the post-Reconstruction South, continued to spring up throughout the 1910s and 1920s, particularly in the Piedmont of North and South Carolina and Georgia. These communities, such as Pacolet, Laurens, and Whitmire in South Carolina, Pelzer and Pineville in North Carolina, and Atco, Lannett, and Silvertown in Georgia, represented a considerable investment in the Southern economy by, for the most part, industrial firms from the North. Many of these villages were created with the goal of providing not only adequate housing for the mill labor force but also various amenities such as parks and schools in an effort to attract and hold skilled workers. To accomplish this, principles associated with Progressive Era planning, derived from the Garden City and the City Beautiful movements, were often employed, albeit at a much reduced scale than was found in the New South Garden City.

In many ways, then, as the dream of creating a new urban South which drew together the agricultural and industrial sectors faded, the mill village became the major focus of urban planning in the South. America’s premier town planner, John Nolen, was not particularly interested in designing mill villages in the South. One of his former associates, however, Earle Draper, planned numerous mill villages throughout
the South in the 1920s. One of his plans, that of Chicopee, Georgia, stands as the crown jewel of mill village planning during this period, drawing consciously on Howard’s Garden City principles as well as the City Beautiful aesthetic in its design.

Earle Draper, born in 1893 on Cape Cod, trained as a Landscape Architect at Massachusetts College at Amherst, which later became the University of Massachusetts. After graduation in 1915, Draper secured a position with John Nolen’s growing planning firm in Cambridge. As Charles E. Aguas, Draper’s foremost biographer, learned in an interview with the planner, “Shortly after I went to work for him in the Boston area in the late summer of 1915 Nolen asked if I would be interested in going to Charlotte, North Carolina to follow up on preliminary plans he had drawn of Myers Park—and to represent him in Kingsport Tennessee. I said I thought I would enjoy going there, as I had never been South.”

Nolen must have immediately recognized Draper’s skills, expressing sufficient confidence in his young assistant to put him in charge on the ground of two of the firm’s most important projects. Draper further noted that “I ended up spending about three weeks each month working out the final plans and individual landscape designs for Myers Park and about one week a month in Kingsport, revising and extending the plans. You might say that ninety-percent of the work on Kingsport was done by me—although Nolen is credited with being the town planner.” Though this was probably a bit of an exaggeration, Draper’s role at Kingsport was crucial, largely because, as Draper stated, “Nolen detested traveling on the local trains, so I think it was with a sense of relief that he turned the South to me—although he occasionally came down on a consultation.”

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Nolen and Draper’s work at Myers Park, “the foremost suburban development in the entire Southeast at the time,”244 helped draw the attention of other New South boosters. As Aguar writes, “In Myers Park, Draper made the final working drawings, fit the roads to the contours of the land, and proceeded to implement the novel methods developed by Nolen, Draper, and George Stephens—the sponsor—to attract Charlotte’s most influential citizens out of the city and into the countryside.”245 This would be much the same clarion call as was heard in Charleston, as Rhett and his associates worked unsuccessfully to attract Charleston’s elite to Pinewood Park.

Through these projects Draper established himself as a planner in his own right. After an amicable parting with Nolen, Draper opened his own firm in Charlotte in 1917, eventually opening an office in Atlanta to coordinate work in that state. With the collapse of the P. J. Berckmans Company in 1917 under the weight of an intractable family squabble and the relocation to Washington of William Bell Marquis to assist in the war effort, Draper was probably the only professionally trained Landscape Architect and town planner living in the South. With his experience in the burgeoning New South city of Charlotte, Draper was able to draw on a wealthy clientele to establish his business. As Aguar writes,

Many of Draper’s jobs throughout the southeast can be traced to the network of his influential Myers Park neighbors: CEOs of banks; representatives from real estate firms; and the higher echelon from electric power and other utility companies, newspapers, tobacco, rubber tire, and other industries, in addition to ‘king’ cotton and textiles. Several of the same people wore many hats, as members of boards that established colonies of private summer retreats in the mountains of Western North Carolina; built public resorts with facilities for golf, tennis, and boating; developed second home subdivisions; and built or greatly expanded private college campuses, church assembly grounds, public parks, and related cultural institutions. Improved housing and living conditions for mill hands, as well as industrial executives, managers, and overseers, received more attention in the decade from 1920 to 1930 than any previous period in history.
Earle Draper—too artistic to himself become a captain of industry—was clearly in the right place, at the right time, to apply his creative abilities and orchestrate the resurgence of an entire region.246

With his training as a Landscape Architect as well as his stint with Nolen, Draper was steeped in the planning principles of the Progressive Era. In addition to these influences, in 1922 Draper traveled to Europe, “making sketches and taking photographs of the greatest gardens and open spaces on the continent.”247 Undoubtedly Draper also visited Garden Cities such as Letchworth and Welwyn as well as planned cities on the continent, gathering ideas to apply in his own planning practice.

These ideas can clearly be seen in the plan for Chicopee (Figure 6.6). The textile mill village of Chicopee was created in 1926 by the Johnson & Johnson Company in the rolling hills of the Georgia Piedmont, just outside Gainesville and around fifty miles northeast of Atlanta. As Aguar writes, “Robert Wood Johnson, Sr., president at the time that Chicopee was developed, is said to have personally selected the site, culminating a five-year search to locate the perfect place to build ‘the cleanest, finest, and most modern cotton mill in the entire world.’”248 As the National Resources noted in its 1939 report, “Chicopee was established as a model community for the manufacture of surgical and sanitary dressings to supplement the production of the Johnson & Johnson plant at Chicopee Falls, Mass.”249

By the time planning began on Chicopee Draper had already completed several village plans and had observed tremendous changes in the urban landscape of the American South. As he wrote in 1927, “The problem of industrial village planning in the Southeast which, to a large extent, centers around the southern textile mills, may be
summarized briefly as the intelligent application of sound principles of town planning to southern industrial requirements." Draper observed that "The Southeast is passing from the agricultural to the industrial era. Prior to the twentieth century, although there were a good many industries in the Southeast, it would undoubtedly be classified as agriculture, and whole sections now would keep the same classification. Yet the
tremendous growth, largely in the Piedmont section of the Southeast, along many industrial lines would justify the observer in stating that the Southeast as a whole was well along in its industrial era."251

Draper was quick to point out the unique aspects of the mill village development in the Piedmont South. As he wrote, "The industry of textile manufacturing, which is not only the most important in the South from the standpoint of economic investment, but also in number of plants, is the only industry as whole in which housing the employees in attractive villages is considered as a necessary part of plant operation and capitalized as part of plant investment."252 Draper believed that this was largely because mill owners "prefer to develop their own textile towns, or to select a location in a country town, where housing facilities usually do not exist to a sufficient extent to take care of the workers. Therefore, the necessity for building and maintaining employees houses is quite as important as building and keeping up the mill and machinery."253

Draper believed that the reason the Piedmont South was successful in attracting textile operations was the available labor force. As he wrote, "The great source of mill labor in the Southeast is from the southern Appalachian Mountains, where there live at the present time over three million white people, homogenous in race, the purest group of English and Scotch descent in the country to-day, with the highest birthrate in the country, wresting a meager living which only provides the barest necessities of life."254 Reflecting the Progressive Era's unshakable belief in environmental influences in the uplifting of the human species, Draper noted that "To bring such people into a mill village of a fairly attractive type is like advancing time one or more generations in the

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standard of living.” Acknowledging and even praising the conditions under which this environment was created, Draper added that “it would hardly have been possible under other than paternal conditions for the standards now established in textile villages to have come into effect. . . .”

It was in this paternalism that Nolen’s protege glimpsed Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City in the American South. Mill owners, Draper maintained, would eventually tire of owning a town. He foresaw that “The time is coming. . . . when further advancement in the social order and in living conditions will have to be made by the people themselves.” Referring to the governing of the village by the residents—and thus the transfer of the mill owner’s assets to the community—Draper stated that “If this proprietary scheme can develop into something like the English garden city idea, when the people are ready for it, without having to go through the era of real estate speculation, we shall have witnessed a remarkable transition.” Though the ideal of communally owned mill villages in the South was unlikely to reach fruition, clearly Draper, in the twilight of Progressive Era planning, still thought it a possibility.

Though the planning of Southern mill villages, of which Draper was an expert, presented similar challenges as other planning projects, there were unique aspects that required particular skills. As Draper wrote,

In the planning of a new southern textile village, the general requirements of planning are practically the same as any lotting or subdivision development. Gently sloping topography, adequate to take care of drainage and gravity water-supply, is an advantage over either flat or mountainous situations. A certain percentage of wooded area is always important in the South. It is quite important that the streets and pathways be laid out to give direct and adequate circulation to and from the mill village center, and to the adjoining town or city. Practically all the workers return to their homes for the noonday meal, and the majority of them walk, except in the larger textile communities where houses may be located at some distance from the mill, so the matter of circulation is an
important feature. This brings us to the third and very necessary essential—that is, the location of the buildings. The homes of the workers are usually of the bungalow type, from three to six rooms in size. A general store of some size is usually built, with the second floor devoted to lodge hall and necessary offices. The villages must have their own churches, even when they are close to a city or town, and as the Methodists and Baptists are usually present in about equal numbers, and greatly outnumber other denominations, two churches of this type are usually to be found in every village of over one hundred houses.259

With this perspective on planning textile mill villages in the American South, as well as his knowledge of Garden City and City Beautiful planning principles, Draper turned his attention and expertise to Chicopee. Though not a full blown New South Garden City in terms of size, population, form, function, and control, it closely approximates the model and represents a continuation of this Southern urban planning tradition.

The site and situation of Chicopee were especially advantageous. As Newton writes, “the founding of Chicopee was typical of the southward migration that proved so disastrous to the textile mill-towns of New England. The attractions in the present instance could hardly be denied: abundant labor at low wages, cheaper power, inexpensive land, and minimal tax rates—all on a fine site near the main line of the Southern Railway, with clean air and water for the manufacture of a product demanding especially sanitary conditions.”260

The plan for Chicopee applied Draper’s principles to this attractive site. The 4,000 acre site purchased by Johnson & Johnson was divided into three basic components: a townsite of around 250 acres, which included residential sections and a small town center; a factory site of several hundred acres; and an extensive greenbelt comprising the balance of the site surrounding the development to act as a buffer for the
project as well as to provide agricultural opportunities for the residents and the company.

The physical layout of the townsite was firmly situated in the City Beautiful tradition, with a “Town Center,” park spaces, and curvilinear streets. As Draper described his work, “The general plan for the industrial town of Chicopee, Ga., represents a solution of a problem which comes as near being ideal in the relation of the street circulation to the mill and town center, satisfactory adjustment of the block and lot plan to the topography, and the provision for open areas, as I have ever seen worked out. The improvements to be carried out from this plan, when completed, will make it the best example of the well built, completely developed textile community in the South.” Draper went on to praise the architectural style of the housing that the company was constructing, noting that “In the newly completed mill village bungalows, a departure has been made from the usual wood type of construction by building all the houses of brick veneer, varying the design with stucco gables and different roof types, providing asbestos shingle roofs, copper gutters and down-spouts connected to storm drainage system, and a type of inside finish which is better than is usually used. The village itself will be made complete in every detail, even all wires being placed underground both for street lights and house service.”

The form of the townsite was aesthetically pleasing and unified, despite the site being bisected by a major highway. The National Resources Committee glowingly described the townsite in 1939, noting that “The plan forms a well-organized unit about a town center. The main highway from Washington, D.C. through Gainesville to Atlanta passes the town center, separating the industrial area from the residential

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district. Radials leading from the center connect (sic) all parts of the residential area with the center, affording direct access to the plant. About 12 percent of the planned area, not including the open space in the town center and about the plant, was allotted to park and recreation. In terms of residential and commercial lots, the report added that “Lots were planned 65 feet wide by 130 feet deep, permitting wide side yards and, consequently, a lower insurance rate. Approximately 500 residential lots and 10 business lots were planning, providing for a population of about 2,000 persons.”

There was one group, however, which was not to be counted in this population, and that was the African American population. It was Draper’s contention, and presumably that of the mill owners in the South, that in terms of skills “the negro does not make a machine worker.” Because of the nature of the labor force in the South, Draper had to acknowledge the role of the African American worker, noting that “At the same time there are a number of negroes employed in any southern mill, usually for warehouse duty, in connection with the handling of supplies of cotton and finished goods, as janitors, etc.” In Draper’s conception of a mill village, “This necessitates houses for negroes which must be located in a group and, if possible, as a unit by themselves, usually on the outskirts of the village.”

At Chicopee, in fact, there was no provision for the African American population. There were obviously black workers at the mill, though they were probably drawn from the surrounding area. Some may have even traveled as far as Gainesville to work in the mill. In no way, however, were African Americans planned to be a part of the community life of Chicopee.
As the plans for Chicopee progressed, it was clear that in terms of ownership and governance the company, in classic paternalistic mill village style, would own and control the development. Schools were built and maintained by the company, and the company provided stores for the residents. The company also maintained a health and dental clinic for the residents, in which the National Resources Committee reported that "Nonresident doctors and dentists furnish services at a nominal charge, half of which is borne by the company." In addition, "Free prenatal, maternity, and child care is given to all families" by the company.

Though Chicopee was not a New South Garden City in terms of size, population, form, function, and control, the traces of the tradition can be discerned in the plan. More to the point, like the New South Garden City, Chicopee incorporated a significant agricultural element into its plan. In fact, Draper believed that in the Southern textile mill village, agriculture had to be incorporated into the plan because of the rural roots of the workforce. As Draper wrote in 1927, "Twenty to thirty years ago practically all the lots in southern textile villages were 100' x 200', because the Southeast was essentially a farming country and no one was accustomed to living on a small lot." Draper added that "The majority of the operatives—possibly 80% in country mill communities, and not over 50% in communities located on the outskirts of a city—usually use the rear yard for home gardens. Where land is available the mills assign additional space for garden purposes for the operatives desiring them, in which corn and larger vegetables are grown."

For Draper, then, there was an inextricable link between the urban texture of the mill village and the agricultural sector of the South, much like for the visionaries of the
New South Garden City. Draper realized, however, that for mill owners this connection between the industrial and agrarian ways of life could create numerous interesting and unforeseen problems. As Draper wrote, “Very few villages allow cows and pigs to be kept, except on the outskirts of the village, and this has led to the necessity for locating in accessible and yet unobjectionable areas, community cow-stalls, and when not entirely proscribed, as is the case in many instances, the pigpens. The average mill village family has a fondness for their cow only exceeded by their fondness for their cottage organ,—the latter, by the way, being quite an interesting feature of textile community life, which is brought to the villages from the mountain home. Each cow is kept in a separate stall and is milked by the owner. Some of the new villages, where sanitation is made a big issue, have installed herds and dairies and sell milk to the operatives below cost, in order to eliminate the nuisance of scattered stock.”

At Chicopee, the link between the industrial and the agricultural sectors was made part of the several thousand acre buffer that surrounded the village. As the National Resources Committee report noted, “The undeveloped residential section as well as other areas have been allotted employees for garden plots and are intensively used. About 4,000 acres of land owned and farmed by the company completely protects the town from undesirable growth at its periphery. . . .” The report further noted that “Portions of the 4,000 acres not adapted to cultivation are being reforested with pine seedlings. . . .”

In many ways, the plan of Chicopee represents the vision of the New South Garden City writ small. Even so, the town that emerged from the planning process was not exactly the one envisioned by Draper, which was a typical occurrence in planning.
and development projects in the early decades of the twentieth century. Less than half of the planned 500 houses were completed by 1939, and the population, planned to be around 2,000 souls, was around half that. Still, Johnson & Johnson worked diligently to create an uplifting environment for its workforce. As Newton describes the town that eventually emerged, "The town center consisted of a community building, two stores, and two churches. . . . The group was set well back from the highway on its own curving access road. Behind it stretched the central open space, with baseball field, park, and school site. . . ." Newton added that "There was excellent neighborhood spirit in the new village; even before the community building was erected several organizations sprang up naturally and received popular support without pressure from the company."275

Chicopee represents a high water mark in mill town development in the American South. As the National Resources Committee report noted, "Chicopee is the best, although not the largest, of the mill villages visited in the South." The report added that "Its present development has closely followed the original plan. The street system has been effectively fitted to the gently rolling topography. . . ." The report concluded that "Even in its immature state, Chicopee has a charm which is the result of good planning and landscape treatment."277

Much of the success of Chicopee can be traced to Draper's plan, which drew from the New South Garden City tradition that he had experienced with John Nolen as well as in his own extensive observations. Chicopee, on a small scale, effectively drew together the industrial and agricultural sectors of the South, just as the New South
Garden Cities were planned to do. And though Chicopee was a “one industry” town, it stood as a reminder of what was possible in developing the New South city.

Chicopee essentially represented the last effort to draw together the industrial and agricultural sectors of the South in a new urban form. Though it was much smaller in scale than the plans for North Charleston, Kingsport, Farm City, or Clewiston, it still drew on the essential traditions of Progressive Era planning, which were firmly based on Garden City and City Beautiful principles. In many ways it was fitting that the last gasp of the New South Garden City was heard at a Southern mill village, since this urban form represented the introduction of planning in the South.

The efforts expended by so many, in terms of both time and treasure, in creating the New South Garden City may have had mixed results across the region, yet there was no doubt that the urban places that resulted from these efforts, whether in the South Carolina lowcountry, the hills of eastern Tennessee and Georgia, the swamplands of south Florida, or the abandoned lands of eastern North Carolina, represented an improvement in the lives of thousands of people in the South. Opportunities had been created where there were none, hope had been generated where it was lacking, and dreams of a new future had been spun. The vision of men like Rhett, MacRae, O’Brien, Marquis, Nolen, and Draper represented an ambitious urban planning tradition that sought to reshape and recreate the future urban landscape of the South, drawing together the modern and the traditional, the industrial and the agricultural, in a truly unique American urban planning form, the New South Garden City.

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64 National Resources Committee, 37.

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66 Dennis to Nolen, 7 February 1916, Nolen Collection, Box #26, Cornell University.

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Chapter 7

Conclusion

The coming of the Depression of the 1930s altered the trajectory of planning in the United States. The response of the federal government during Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal to the economic crisis permanently engaged the government in planning in a variety of activities, including public housing, new town planning, and rural homesteads. The roles of private sector visionaries like Rhett, Dennis, MacRae, and O'Brien diminished in favor of the government planner, who held the purse strings to projects both large and small. The dream of New South visionaries to create a new urban future that drew together the country and the city in a new urban form was essentially over.

With the Crash of 1929, work on the New South Garden City projects faltered. Property sales at North Charleston ground to a halt, and the development lurched towards foreclosure at the hands of northern bondholders. At Kingsport, the Crash forced the closure of several plants, and growth in that city slowed, though it did not completely cease. For MacRae and Farm City, the coming of the Great Depression ended any chance that investors for the project would materialize, and the plan slipped from public consciousness. Development at Clewiston stalled, and at Chicopee, with only half of the town completed, Johnson & Johnson temporarily shelved plans to complete the town; eventually the plans for the remaining half were permanently shelved.

As the New South visionaries, with their large scale plans financed by private investors or willing philanthropists, faded from the scene, the task of building a new
urban future fell largely to the federal government. With the inception of the New Deal under Roosevelt, ideas were proposed, adopted, and dropped with dizzying rapidity, as any idea that seemed to hold the promise of economic revitalization was accepted, a program instituted, and when the results were not immediate, quickly discarded in favor of another scheme. Experimentation and a search for something that would work was paramount, as the government struggled to overcome the seemingly intractable economic downturn that wracked much of the country.

Planners found a large role in the various New Deal programs. Many were involved in planning parks and other facilities in the countryside, as well as in designing new roadways that were being laid out across America. The "Alphabet Agencies" of the Roosevelt recovery effort involved a vast corps of professionals to direct the activities of the burgeoning federal workforce involved in a plethora of projects.

One of the main urban planning efforts involved the provision of adequate housing in the cities of the United States. The public housing projects of the Public Works Administration were key to this effort in cities across America. In the South Carolina lowcountry, for instance, several housing projects were planned and constructed in the City of Charleston. This effort accelerated with the approach of World War II, and drew planners to North Charleston to design sprawling residential complexes to house war workers. Many of these projects would become permanent features of the landscape of the Charleston Neck, as well as throughout urban America.

These projects were for the most part situated in existing cities, and as such can be viewed as conservative, preserving to a great extent the fabric of urban society that was in place before the Crash. The push to build new urban places was embodied in the
effort to build "greenbelt" towns. This program sought to build on the momentum generated by the plan of Clarence Stein and Henry Wright for the city of Radburn, New Jersey, just outside of New York City, which they billed as "America's first garden city." Begun in 1927, Radburn was a project of the City Housing Corporation of New York, and though the plan bore some resemblance to Howard's model, it was clearly lacking the combination of agricultural and industrial activities that was the hallmark of the Garden City vision. Still, Radburn became the touchstone of urban planning in the Depression years and beyond, despite the fact that the Crash of 1929 effectively ended construction at the "model city" with only one of three sections completed.

With the coming of the Depression and the fading from public awareness of the New South Garden City projects, Radburn became the accepted archetype of the New Deal's new towns program. The new towns program was part of the charge of the Resettlement Administration, which planned four new towns: Greendale, near Milwaukee; Greenhills, near Cincinnati; Greenbrook, New Jersey; and Greenbelt, Maryland. Greenbrook was never built, and of the three towns that were built Greenbelt was far and away the most famous, largely because of its location just outside of Washington. Though the greenbelt towns incorporated a commercial center the government made no effort to integrate agricultural and industrial activities, virtually abandoning the central tenets of Howard's vision. In fact, the greenbelt towns as planned and built by the federal government were essentially suburban developments with their economic lifelines tethered to the adjacent city.

Thus the foremost new towns program of the New Deal period, and the program that set the model for postwar planning in America, was based on a suburban model of
the urban future. Interestingly, none of the planned greenbelt cities were located in the South, which had been an area of considerable new town planning in the 1910s and 1920s with the creation not only of New South Garden Cities but also a large number of textile mill villages and towns. The only large new town built in the South during the New Deal was Norris, Tennessee. Planned for the Tennessee Valley Authority by Earle Draper in 1933, Norris represents the only significant new urban place built in the South during this period, and its purpose was not to tap into the region’s agricultural and industrial potential but to house workers for the TVA construction project. Still, the plan for Norris has considerable appeal, and stands as an excellent model of design, with a street network fitted to the rolling topography of eastern Tennessee and a small town center reflecting the City Beautiful aesthetic that had been such a key component of planning in the early years of the twentieth century.

Other than the public housing projects that sprang up in the cities of the South and Norris, the major planning activity in the region centered on the Subsistence Homestead projects. These projects, of which Penderlea Subsistence Farmsteads was one of the most prominent, were established throughout the South and included both farm communities as well as communities linked to industrial activities. Around half of the industrial homestead projects were located in the South. Designed for workers to commute short distances to nearby factories while growing food on their own plots of land, a plan highly reminiscent of Rhett’s vision for Charleston Farms in 1912, most of these communities were established in Alabama near Birmingham, in Texas, or in Mississippi. Agricultural communities, on the other hand, were established at various points in the South based on a wide range of agricultural criteria. None of these
communities, either the industrial or the agricultural, numbered more than a few hundred families and, based on local conditions, met with varying degrees of success.

In terms of a new urban vision for the South or for America, then, none of the planning activities of the New Deal era or the subsequent World War II and postwar era came close to matching the bold dreams reflected in the plans of the New South Garden Cities of North Charleston, Kingsport, Farm City, Clewiston, or Chicopee. The plans for these cities represented a coherent vision of a new urban order for the American South, one which drew together the industrial and the agricultural, the modern and the traditional, in a new urban landscape. That these cities did not develop as planned does not detract from the importance of the endeavor or the ambitious scope of their plans.

The reasons why these cities did not develop as planned are complex, and are tied to the weak economy of the South in the first decades of the twentieth century as well as the South’s weak position in terms of the North American system of cities. More fundamentally, however, the relative lack of success of these experiments in urban planning in the South may rest in the ideological tensions embodied in the New South Garden City. Two contrasting sets of beliefs, or ideologies, were articulated in the plans for these new cities, one representing an ideology of progress which looked to the future and another an ideology of agrarianism rooted in the past. Many New South boosters who dreamed of drawing new immigrants to the South, spurring industrial growth, and reinvigorating the region’s blighted agricultural sector looked to the New South Garden City as a model to achieve progress, loosely defined as the creation of wealth and opportunity. At the same time, however, the control structures put in place in the New South Garden City, which drew on the South’s agrarian traditions in terms
of class, race, ownership, and governance, represented a return to a past in which the reins of society were in the hands of a Southern social and economic elite. This group, which in the antebellum period largely consisted of a white planter and merchant elite and in the modern era in the white male urban business class, saw the New South Garden City as a means of maintaining their grasp on Southern society. Its ideology, represented best in the classic 1930 work *I’ll Take My Stand*, looked to a benignly feudalistic and agrarian past that seemed to be slipping away in the first years of the twentieth century.

By seeking to attract new industries and residents, the New South Garden City represented an ideology tied to the future. By inscribing the agrarian ideology of class and racial segregation into the landscape and ensuring that the interests of private capital were served and governance tightly held, the New South Garden City also represented an ideology tied to the past. Thus, the New South urban business progressives were of two minds, one looking to a future of broadening economic opportunity and another looking to a past in which they controlled the pace and shape of social change. It is no surprise, then, given these contradictory notions, that the New South Garden City experiments faltered, saddled as they were with the dreams of both the past and the future. It is interesting to note that the exception to this generalized lack of success was at Kingsport, which was planned and financed by investors from outside the South.

Though they did not develop as planned, the New South Garden Cities persist in the urban landscape. Despite its difficult beginnings, the years of World War II and its aftermath were a period of tremendous growth for the first New South Garden City of
North Charleston, fueled by activity at the Charleston Navy Base and the Shipyard. The jobs at the Shipyard were some of the highest paid industrial jobs in South Carolina, and provided a solid anchor for the Charleston economy. Growth was also spurred by the success of the Westvaco operation as well as expansion at the Charleston Air Force Base, created in 1942. As first envisioned by Rhett and his associates, Charleston’s Neck had become a beehive of activity and a major source of wealth for the South Carolina lowcountry.

For the planned city of North Charleston, the result of this rapid growth was a mixed blessing. In the 1940s and 1950s houses were thrown up by developers with no architectural aesthetic, eager simply to turn a quick dollar. In addition, in the 1960s, with little protection from land use controls, mobile homes were allowed into the city, even on plots of land that had been designated as park space in the Marquis plan. Apartment complexes were also built within the fabric of the plan, generally with little regard for the original plan for the city. The only significant park space that was retained in the planned city was the central area of Park Circle, which was covered by baseball fields as well as the cement block USO building. In terms of commercial areas, growth of the Montague Avenue corridor was sporadic and uneven. In addition, Charleston Farms, planned to provide large lots for a family to grow vegetables and other crops while also working in the factories of North Charleston, was subdivided into small residential lots over the course of several years, developing with a mishmash of bungalow houses, mobile home parks, and small retail operations.

Indeed, as North Charleston developed it became increasingly difficult to discern that it in fact had been a planned city. The chaotic jumble of land uses, the
distinct lack of open space, and the disjointed and visually unappealing commercial
district bears little resemblance to the vision of Rhett and his associates. The Marquis
plan, which stands as a testament to early twentieth century planning, was effectively
buried by the forces of postwar capitalism run amuck in the urban landscape.

In 1972, sixty years after its conception, the residents of North Charleston
finally gained control of their destiny and created the City of North Charleston. With
this move, the last vestiges of an ideology of control by a Southern elite were swept
away. The new city consisted largely of the original planned city of Rhett and Marquis,
with a population of around 21,500 persons. The city, under its first mayor, quickly
began to annex surrounding residential areas, industries, and commercial zones. By
1990, the City of North Charleston was the third largest city in South Carolina, with a
population of just over 70,000. Many of these residents were engaged in activities at
the Charleston Navy Base and the Shipyard, which provided employment to several
generations while continuing to attract migrants to the area. The closure of the Navy
Base and the Shipyard in the 1990s, however, as part of the Department of Defense
cutbacks in the wake of the end of the Cold War, dealt a serious, though not life
threatening, blow to the city’s economy. New industries have come to the city, and the
large areas formerly held by the government for its facilities provide a unique
opportunity for the city’s planners.

Interestingly, as the population of the Neck grew during the 1970s and 1980s,
the population of the planned portion of North Charleston, which became known as Old
Village and Park Circle, actually declined from nearly 8,000 residents in 1970 to just
over 6,000 in 1990. Fundamentally, the jumble of nonconforming uses, abandoned
houses, and rundown residential areas held little appeal for migrants moving to the South Carolina lowcountry. Moreover, young people who had grown up in the area left the planned city, opting for more suburban locations in the Neck, with newer houses, better roads, and improved shopping opportunities. As the City of North Charleston grew, its core, the area envisioned by Rhett and Marquis as a grand urban place drawing on the best of the Garden City and the City Beautiful, was falling into decline.

Still, the traces of the plan of North Charleston can easily be seen in the landscape. Its tracings can also be seen in other New South Garden Cities planned in the 1910s and 1920s. Kingsport stands as the most successful of the planned cities, with a population today of over 40,000 and a diversified economy based on industrial operations and a robust service economy catering to visitors to the mountains of eastern Tennessee. Penderlea, though it bears little resemblance to MacRae’s vision of Farm City, is a vibrant community of several hundred persons engaged in both agricultural and small scale industrial activities. Clewiston is also a robust community, with a population of over 6,000, many engaged in tourist-related services as well as industrial operations associated with the areas main economic activity, sugar cane. And though the mill village of Chicopee remains a small community of under 1,000, with a workforce tightly bound to the neighboring textile mill, its plan is very much in evidence in the greenbelt that still surrounds and protects the community from encroachment.

After World War II, planning for all practical purposes became increasingly identified with suburban developments surrounding large central cities. These plans, with Levittown representing the classic example, were largely dependent on the
automobile, and represented a continuation of an outward migration from the central cities that in fact had been going on throughout the 1900s. The planning of new towns for all practical purposes ended, with the exception in the 1960s and 1970s of Columbia, Maryland and Reston, Virginia. The fame of these rather modest projects is indicative of their uniqueness in the practice of planning in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the first decades of the 1900s many believed that the world could be reshaped and improved through concerted planned action. With an ambitious plan and a bold vision, anything was possible. Planners with a set of lantern slides and maps under their arms carried with them the notion that progress could be made towards creating a better world. With the rapid growth of cities in the latter decades of the 1800s and early 1900s, much of the drive to improve the human condition focused on the urban environment. Men of vision as diverse as Peter Kropotkin, Edward Bellamy, Ebenezer Howard, and Charles Robinson imagined a new world in which the condition of the human species could be bettered through the establishment of new cities or the improvement of existing urban centers. In this new urban world, harmony could be found, and for Kropotkin and Howard it was the harmony found in the yoking together of the arts of industry and agriculture, factory and field, in a new urban space. These men of vision could also be men of action, as exemplified by Howard's successful efforts to build two Garden Cities in England, Letchworth and Welwyn, which stand as models for subsequent efforts to remake the urban landscape.

In the United States, new industrial cities emerged in the latter decades of the 1800s and the first years of the 1900s. These cities, such as Vandergrift, Pullman, and
Gary, were largely attempts to create an improved and in many ways insulated environment for the industrial workforce, to protect them from the influences of “alien” doctrines such as socialism and anarchism. The aesthetics of these new urban places, particularly in the cases of Vandergrift and Pullman, were intended to not only provide a secure environment but also uplift the worker and his family, enlightening them to the possibilities of the world around them while blocking out ideas that might make them examine their own situations in a somewhat harsher light.

In the American South during the latter 1800s and early 1900s, industrial cities also appeared, including Anniston and Fairfield. In addition, the landscape of the South was transformed through the creation of numerous mill towns, which in many ways served as gateways for the rural population of the region into the possibilities and potentialities of urban life. These cities and town changed the nature of the South as New South boosters sought to drag the region into the industrial age.

Many New South visionaries, however, saw another alternative, and that was to combine the agricultural core of the South with the growing industrialization of the modern age. The goal was to bring to the South the progress of modernization while holding on to the agrarian basis of the Southern economy. Though these ideologies were at odds with one another, men such as Rhett, Dennis, MacRae, and O’Brien, along with professional planners like Marquis, Nolen, and Draper, firmly believed that a new urban form could be created that would draw together these two sectors of the Southern world. Employing planning principles associated with the Progressive Era, which firmly drew on Howard’s Garden City model and Robinson’s City Beautiful aesthetic, the New South Garden Cities that were planned and created stand as monuments to the
efforts of New South leaders to bring progress and prosperity to this region. The cities
that these visionaries created represent the only true applications of Howard’s principles
in North America, though passed through the ideological filters of progress and social
control in the New South. The New South Garden City represents a truly unique
moment in the history of planning and in the development of the North American urban
landscape.
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**Interviews and Correspondence**


Vita

Dean Sinclair received his Bachelor of Arts from the College of Charleston in 1978, with a major in Urban Studies. He received a Master of Arts in Urban Affairs from the University of Delaware in 1981. His thesis, entitled "An Analysis of Alcohol and Crime Problems for the Counties of the United States," explored the relationship between violent crimes and violent alcohol deaths and property crimes and chronic alcohol conditions such as cirrhosis of the liver. After working in Washington, D.C., Mr. Sinclair attended the University of South Carolina, and received a Master of Arts in Geography in 1984. His thesis, "The Growth and Development of the Republican Party in South Carolina, 1970-1980," examined the transformation of South Carolina from a one-party state dominated by the Democratic Party to a state with a vibrant and competitive two-party system. After working as an Intelligence Officer for the Central Intelligence Agency and a City Planner for the City of North Charleston, Mr. Sinclair was accepted into the doctoral program in Geography at Louisiana State University in 1993. He is presently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana.
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Candidate: Dean Thrift Sinclair
Major Field: Geography
Title of Dissertation: "A New Town Will Appear on Charleston Neck": North Charleston and the Creation of the New South Garden City

Approved:
W. V. Davidson
Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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