COMMEMORATING QUEEN CHARLOTTE: RACE, GENDER, AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY, 1750 TO 2014

by

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ABSTRACT

BETHANY REBEKAH HOLT GREGORY. Commemorating Queen Charlotte: race, gender, and the politics of memory, 1750 to 2016. (Under the direction of DR. CHRISTOPHER CAMERON)

Despite the vast research by historians on Queen Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz as a person, little research has been conducted on what she meant to the people of regions named in her honor. This thesis seeks to uncover the significance of her namesake to the people of Charlotte, North Carolina by understanding local commemorations and race relations within the city. After reviewing multiple newspaper articles, works of art, commemoration celebrations documentations and memorabilia, the meaning of Queen Charlotte varied overtime as a result of varying political ideologies. Queen Charlotte was a symbol of local pride, an image for white elitism, the first African queen, and a heroine for local women.

DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2009, an English reporter for *The Guardian* wrote an article about Queen Sophia Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, wife of King George III, entitled “Was this Britain’s First Black Queen?” Focusing on the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, the reporter, Stuart Jefferies, opened with multiple examples of locals’ fascination with the queen’s namesake, such as commemorated statues and streets named in her honor, but he argued that her race was the city’s current fascination. Jefferies discussed various theories of the Queen’s descent and the possibility that she was black. He interviewed white and black Charlotteans for their perspective on the matter. One interviewee, African-American Congressman Mel Watt, said, “In private conversations, African-Americans have always acknowledged and found a sense of pride in believing the queen was black. It's great that this discussion can now come out of the closet into the public places of Charlotte, so we all can acknowledge and celebrate it.” Mel Watt’s wife, Eulada, likewise noted, “I believe African-American Charlotteans have always been proud of Queen Charlotte's heritage and acknowledge it with a smile and a wink. Many of us are now enjoying a bit of 'I told you so', now that the story is out.”

Those interviewed in the white community of the city, however, had a different perspective. Desmond Shawe-Taylor, curator of Queen Charlotte’s portraits, said in regards to the theory of black descent, “I can't see it to be honest… I look at [her portrait] pretty often and it's never occurred to me that she's got African features of any kind. It sounds like the ancestry is there and it's not impossible it was reflected in her features,

but I can't see it."[1] This article about Queen Charlotte's race clearly highlighted that middle and upper class whites and blacks struggled with such a possibility. This is likely a result of the city's white elite dominated past.

Many residents within Charlotte inevitably claimed the title of "Queen City." Queen Charlotte, however, was more than just a name for the city. For Charlotte, she became an ever-changing symbol as a result of insistent politicization by various groups, such as white elites and middle-class African Americans. Such rituals honoring the Queen might have aspired to a unity beyond political division, but, because of their origins and the political needs of these groups, it has been difficult for Queen Charlotte to reflect an ideological consensus within the city.

Whether or not many blacks and whites in Charlotte were aware of the queen's debated appearance before the twenty-first century, many whites embraced her as their queen from the city's earliest days. The area's inhabitants founded the city of Charlotte in 1762 shortly after they established their own county. By the mid-1760s, with an official charter and courthouse, the locals named their new county Mecklenburg in honor of the new queen bride, Princess Charlotte. To honor her and the king, they named their newly established trading town Charlottetown. In addition to North Carolina's Charlotte, six other towns in the colonies named themselves in honor of Queen Charlotte. News of the royal wedding perhaps captured the backwoodsmen's imaginations, as well as those of their wives and daughters. Despite their displeasure with his majesty's colonial officers and regulations, the villagers thought it a pleasant name for new provinces.[2]

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[1] Stuart Jeffries, "Was This Britain's First Black Queen?," *The Guardian*, March 11, 2009, theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/12/race-monarchy.
[2] Ibid.

Commemorating Queen Charlotte played a significant role in Charlotte, North Carolina's history, especially in highlighting race and the politics of memory. Today, Charlotte's streets provide ample evidence of the city's former queen, as many street names, restaurants, and businesses bear her name. City boards erected multiple statues in her honor. Though harmonious on the surface, the queen's namesake and memory caused moments of tension between whites and blacks in Charlotte. Throughout most of the city's history, the white elite controlled the memory of Queen Charlotte. In the 1930s, however, middle class blacks mounted a challenge, claiming that Queen Charlotte was of African descent and as a result challenged the politics of memory within the city.

Throughout Charlotte's history, three overall visions and symbols of Queen Charlotte collided as a result of the city's changing racial and political framework. The first was the celebrated royal figure, which derived from North Carolina's relationship with the British monarchy and became a symbol of liberty for women and eventually the city itself. Next was the white elite's queen, which was a symbol representing white supremacy within the city. This resulted from wealthy white businessmen dominating the Progressive era Charlotte. Last was a symbol that highlighted racial tensions within Charlotte, a result of her debated racial origins emerging following the eighty-year era of Jim Crow. Queen Charlotte's changing image and reputation provides a lens into Charlotte's history by demonstrating how certain groups of whites and blacks tried to control or alter her image based on the social and economic atmosphere of the time.

The memory of a figure like Queen Charlotte exemplifies how historical memory is shaped over time in relation to present needs and ever-changing frameworks—both in the realm of historiography and mythology. By definition, historical memory is the way

in which populations construct and identify with particular narratives about historical periods or events.[3] David Blight argued that historians try to master the most conflicted elements of the past by understanding the politics of memory. In his works, Blight studied the relationship between African American leaders and white elite leaders within a community. His studies revealed that politics shaped their individual beliefs on how certain events and people should be remembered and commemorated. In addition, when significant events caused a shift in political ideologies, historical memory shifted as well. Such changes altered Queen Charlotte's image and memory throughout Charlotte's history. [4]

In addition to political ideologies, race and gender ideologies contributed to the queen's ever-changing memory. According to Jacqueline Jones, "scholars recently dislodged racial and gender ideologies from their essentialist moorings and recognized that these ideologies float freely in space and through time, ever changing and ever contingent on specific circumstances." Historians now simply add race and gender into the mix of social signifiers that drive American society-class, stages of life, marital status, and ethnicity. All of these characteristics are subject to constant redefinition; they reveal less about a person's "objective" status and more about the larger political meaning attached to that person's situation in any particular time and place. [5] Historians have argued that throughout much of Charlotte's history, the elite whites dominated political discourse and created race and gender ideologies to insure that a more vulnerable group

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[3] Katherine Hite, "Historical Memory," *International Encyclopedia of Political Science* (SAGE Publications, October 4, 2011), 1078.
[4] David Blight, "What Will Peace among the Whites Bring? Reunion and Race in the Struggle over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 34, no. 3 (1993): 395.
[5] Jacqueline Jones, "Race and Gender in Modern America," The Challenge of American History, 26, no. 1 (March 1998): 220.

would remain a persistent "other." Therefore, elite whites produced the city's memory of the queen to reflect their political, race, and gender ideologies of the era. Blacks, however, challenged this identity and image, adding a new perspective to Charlotte's historical memory of the queen.

The elite whites and middle-class African Americans have expressed conflicting memories of the queen. Both groups claim the queen as a symbol of their own identity. Blight argues that societies and the groups within them "remember and use history as a source of coherence and identity, as a means of contending for power or place, and as a means of controlling access to whatever becomes normative in society."[6] While white elites used the queen as a symbol of power and wealth over the city for years, African Americans used Queen Charlotte as a symbol of black pride. Historian Joan Tumblety agrees with Blight and argues that what is remembered is shaped fundamentally both by the meaning of the initial experience to the individual and by the psychological—and inextricably social—circumstances of recall.[7] For more than two centuries, through the city's cycles of great advancement and periods of contemptuous reaction in American race relations, the struggle over Queen Charlotte's identity was a controlled historical memory by white elites or middle-class blacks depending on the city's political and social position at the time. Therefore, by focusing on the memory of Queen Charlotte and how the groups identified her, a better understanding of the cultural and political engagement with manifestations of the city's past emerges.

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[6] Blight, "What Will Peace among the Whites Bring? Reunion and Race in the Struggle over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture," 400.
[7] Joan Tumblety, *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as a Source and Subject* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 7.

These conflicting historical memories of white elites and middle-class African Americans also affected the commemoration of Queen Charlotte within the city. Selective in the making, collective memory and sites of commemoration are the vehicle for historical remembrance. Commemoration, like ideology, "promotes social groups' commitment to the world around them by producing symbols of their values and aspirations. They gain potentially mythic powers until they fall from grace in the politics of memory."[8] Commemoration ceremonies and sites can be empowering, as well as conflictive, in ways that are unanticipated as well as anticipated. With both groups representing different political ideologies at times, disagreements often occurred over commemoration of the queen. Studying Queen Charlotte's changing image through commemoration highlights these political and social divides. My approach to studying the queen's memory and commemoration consisted of comparing multiple sources to theories on race, gender, and elitism. This helped to highlight why divergent audiences can share the same space for different reasons. When middle-class blacks challenged "official" elite memories of the queen, however, commemorative sites around Queen Charlotte were no longer able to separate themselves from the conflicting political ideologies.

The significance of various groups in Charlotte memorializing and commemorating the queen can be understood by observing how Americans viewed other queens of Britain's past. Whether or not the royal families of Britain should fascinate Americans, many frequently have. Historian Frank Prochaska argued that admiration for the English monarchy was so embedded in colonial American culture that some

[8] Lori Holyfield and Clifford Beacham, "Memory Brokers, Shameful Pasts, and Civil War Commemoration," *Journal of Black Studies* 42, no. 3 (April 2011): 437.

Americans were unable to conceptualize how the new nation could function without the magic of royalty as a binding agent after the war. As a result, many Americans continue to be fascinated with royalty and its affairs even up to present day. During the nineteenth century, many Americans, like their UK counterparts, became obsessed with Queen Victoria. Prochaska called this obsession "Victorian fever." Americans celebrated Queen Victoria during and long after her reign. They were infatuated with her Golden Jubilee of 1887, her Diamond Jubilee of 1897, and her death in 1901. As a result, Victoria became "America's Queen." A few years later, the Daughters of the American Revolution acknowledged Victoria as the "noblest exponent of queenly womanhood the world has seen." [9]

Just as Queen Charlotte's memory was important to the Charlotte region, the reign of Queen Victoria also influenced American culture, lifestyle, and religion, so much so that this period in American history became known as the Victorian Era. Due to the extensive political and cultural changes during and after the Civil War, wealthy and influential Americans were uncertain about the exact American culture to be followed, especially regarding to new money. Hoping to try and stay ahead of the quick rising middle-class, they adopted their post war culture largely from Victorian European culture. Honesty, hard work, extreme modesty in dress, and decent public and private behavior were among the virtues that gained cultural currency in the nineteenth century. The Queen herself believed strongly in these virtues and promoted them by her public example. Americans closely watched and were highly fascinated with Victoria's emergent image as a modern bourgeois female monarch: virtuous wife, mother, and

[9] Frank Prochaska, *The Eagle and the Crown: Americans and the British Monarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 43, 82, 102.

queen.[10] This speaks to the key ties between memory and identity, as Victorian values continued to be influential in America well into the 20th century.

Americans showed similar celebratory interest earlier, during and after the reign of Queen Charlotte and George III. Beyond the naming of newly established towns after the queen, colonials often celebrated the king and queen's birthdays, the birth of their children, and their jubilees with large parties and parades. Artists commemorated these festive occasions with portraits of the king and queen and ceramics decorators and modelers often adapted the images for their wares.[11] The royal families of England unquestionably influenced the culture and interests of the American people.

In the last fifty years, new historiography has explored Queen Charlotte as a person and queen, addressing how the people of England, the American colonies, and the city of Charlotte remembered her. Currently, most scholars portray Queen Charlotte as a queen who simply fulfilled the demands of her marriage with George III. One of the first historians who examined the queen as an individual was Olwen Headley. In *Queen Charlotte*, published in 1976, Headley provided a scholarly picture of the queen's life. Headley offered a portrait of Queen Charlotte which was a bit too sympathetic, but sensible, consistent, and rich in detail. While most other secondary sources viewed the Queen staying out of political affairs, Headley argued for her political importance by noting her special interest in English politics and influence on the English monarchy once the King became ill.[12]

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[10] Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich, *Remaking Queen Victoria:* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 35.
[11] Prochaska, *The Eagle and the Crown: Americans and the British Monarchy*. In addition, samples of these artifacts can be seen in the Mint Museum of Charlotte, North Carolina.
[12] Olwen Headley, *Queen Charlotte* (London: John Murray, 1976).

Along with her political role, a key question in elite memory has been the constant changing portraits and images of her. The first historian to trace these changes from her coronation until her death was Michael Levey in his work *Portraits of Queen Charlotte*. He argued that Queen Charlotte herself was under no illusions about her appearance, but her vanity was not among her motives. Painters summoned to portray Queen Charlotte encountered problems "far more fundamental" than the fact that she was not conventionally attractive. Levey contended that some of these problems arose from the very nature of the ordered portrait. Such a summons might be an honor, yet it could also be an ordeal. With the queen's high rank and her strong consciousness of it, an artist trying to paint a "likeness" of her faced a difficult task. From these artists, whether intentionally or not, a certain image of the queen emerged. Though Levey made an excellent argument as to why her portraits consistently changed throughout the years, he did not address the dispute with her race and how this debate contributed to multiple depictions of her.[13]

One historian who addressed Queen Charlotte's ethnic background quite passionately was Mario de Valdes y Cocom. Valdes researched some of history's more interesting examples of mixed racial heritage after teaming up with PBS Frontline, and worked closely with genealogical records and researchers to assemble the scholarship. Valdes argued that Queen Charlotte's features in royal portraits were noticeably African. He claimed Queen Charlotte descended from a black branch of the Portuguese royal family, related to Margarita de Castro e Souza. Though most depictions of the queen presented her with white features (fair skin, light hair, light eyes), the portrait of the

[13] Michael Levey, *A Royal Subject: Portraits of Queen Charlotte* (National Gallery, 1977).

queen that Valdes debated was by a Scottish artist, Allan Ramsay. Ramsay's portrait of the queen depicted her with "mulatto" features, including brown eyes, brown skin, curly brown hair, and a "masculine nose." [14] Valdes argued that Ramsay, an abolitionist supporter, sent copies of these paintings to the colonies for other abolitionists to use in support of their cause. Though Valdes made a convincing argument, other historians argued that Queen Charlotte was too far removed from that bloodline to truly be African. For example, British historian Kate Williams said, "If she was black, this raises a lot of important suggestions about not only our royal family but those of most of Europe, considering that Queen Victoria's descendants are spread across most of the royal families of Europe and beyond. If we class Charlotte as black, then ergo Queen Victoria and our entire royal family, [down] to Prince Harry, are also black ... a very interesting concept."[15]

Queen Charlotte has added to her significant ambiguous image. While these historians have debated her changing image, they have failed to consider the way that Queen Charlotte influenced the culture and politics of regions such as Charlotte, North Carolina that embraced her as their queen and symbol. Focusing on the county of Mecklenburg and the city of Charlotte, her reputation as an important character in the region's history and her true ethnic background steadily changed over 250 years amongst white elites and middle-class African Americans. Several questions emerge as a result: Why did Queen Charlotte's debated race cause so much controversy amongst middle and upper-class whites and blacks? How have the people of Charlotte remembered her over

[14] Mario de Valdes y Cocom, "Queen Charlotte," *PBS.org*, n.d., pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/secret/famous/royalfamily.html.
[15] Jeffries, "Was This Britain's First Black Queen?"

the years and what does she look like today? Why is the memory of Queen Charlotte significant to the city's history? These questions can be answered by understanding the significance that white elites had on the production and distribution of Queen Charlotte's memory. White elites used Queen Charlotte to maintain and extend their power over the city in various ways, such as celebrations, plays, and media.

Key sources for this project included newspaper articles, art, individual interviews, memorabilia, letters, and the works of multiple scholars that reflected the queen at some point during Charlotte's history. Most written records represent white, literate elite, and middle-class citizens. As a result, they occupy a disproportionate share of Charlotte's history. In reconstructing Queen Charlotte's memory, I have tried to be especially sensitive to the ways men and women talked about class. People in the New South, particularly Charlotte, spoke openly and unapologetically about class. As a result, concepts of class in Charlotte were contested and had no clear-cut definitions. The "better class" and "white elite" are terms that both black and white business and professional people first used to describe themselves in the 1870s and 1880s. Not only does the term tell us a great deal about the sense of moral and social superiority these men and women presumed, but also the common usage of these terms by blacks and whites reflected a shared definition of class.

Sensitivity to the vocabulary of class in Charlotte also helps to avoid many problems surrounding the usage of the terms "middle class" and "elite." Charlotte's black community in the late nineteenth century did not reflect the traditional triple division (elite, middle, and working); rather Charlotte's black society was two-tiered, divided between a small "better class" of businesspeople and professionals and their spouses and

a large class of laboring men and women. Not until the turn of the twentieth century did Charlotte have a clearly recognizable manufacturing elite and a middle class that defined itself as separate from both elite and the working class. [16] For this particular topic, white and black working class voices, along with working and middle class women, were heard in less obvious ways but not widely until the mid to late twentieth century when the definition of class shifted again.

I argue that Queen Charlotte's professed reputation and image caused controversy amongst residents of Charlotte and highlighted racial and political instability throughout the city's history. White elites claimed her to be of white race and celebrated her figure to reflect their class. Middle-class blacks, however, challenged this image when theories of her African descent appeared. Exact moments and events that marked pivotal shifts in the memory of Queen Charlotte for these groups include the American Revolution, the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence celebrations within the city, exhibitions at the Mint Museum, and city memorials. During each of these moments and events, Queen Charlotte's reputation and image emphasized deeper moments in Charlotte's history, particularly during the Progressive era, the Civil Rights Movement, and the turn of the twenty-first century. Though a controversial figure, Queen Charlotte has been celebrated more than any other figure of Charlotte's history as a result of her unique characteristics compared to that of other queens. My hope is that historians and Charlotteans will not simply see Queen Charlotte as 'just another queen' for whom several counties and a city was named after, but as a queen whose image, memory, and commemoration played a much larger role in the history of Mecklenburg County and the city of Charlotte.

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[16] Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte, 1850 to 1910.*, 1st ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 5.

CHAPTER 1: EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURY CHARLOTTE

A College, Museum, and an Illustrious Queen

In the years leading up to the American Revolution, white residents used Queen Charlotte's namesake as a tool to help alleviate and/or distort political tensions between them and Great Britain. When the local inhabitants honored Queen Charlotte by using her name for the county and the town, it appeared that King George showed favoritism by approving the charter. When it came to building a college and 'museum', however, naming it after the Queen did the locals no favors.

Scots-Irish Presbyterian descendants established Charlotte Town in the 1750s at the crossroads of current day Trade and Tyron Streets. Thomas Polk, a young farmer, led the descendants from the North. The town's location was along a main trading path between the Great Lakes and the Carolinas and beyond to the Savannah River.[1] The trading path had a tremendous impact on Charlotte Town and Mecklenburg County. The town became a normal rest area between Salisbury and Charles Town (Charleston).[2] Travelers would often trade goods for other goods or services rather than currency. As a result of the geographical advantage, Charlotte farmers grew small cash crops: flax, livestock, and grain (which was converted to liquor for easy shipment, probably down the

[1] Mary N. Kratt, *Charlotte, North Carolina: A Brief History* (Charleston, South Carolina: History Press, 2009), 12.
[2] Ibid., 28.

Catawba to Charleston). [3] Though this accounted for little growth over the next few decades, the town was able to maintain a stable economy.

As many people traveled in and out of Charlotte Town, the royal family was a centerpiece of celebrity culture. Many colonials became obsessed with the identity of the queen, especially leading up to the king and queen's wedding. Colonists were especially anxious to know what the new queen looked like. The anxiety spurred the eagerness, swiftness, and ruthlessness with which print-sellers embraced an obvious opportunity for profit. Richard Houston, an English artist famous for royal and elite paintings, presented England and its colonies the first portrait of the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The *Lloyd's Evening Post* in England, the *North Carolina Gazette*, and other colonial newspapers published the portrait. They presented her as an attractive queen with brown hair, blue eyes, fine neck and hands, and rosy cheeks. However, Mr. R. Sayer, a print seller, later discovered that this portrait by Richard Houston was "an exact copy except a little alteration in the hair of a small print of Mrs. George Pitt, sister to the late Sir Richard Atkins." [4]

It was not the first time that an old print had been adapted in the absence of a genuine likeness, but usually this happened when it was likely that no one would ever find out what the sitter looked like.[5] One of the most shameless aspects of this scam was, inevitably, the true appearance of the princess would become apparent to everyone within a couple of months following her coronation. However, when 'genuine' portraits of the

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[3] Dannye Romine, *Mecklenburg: a Bicentennial Story* (Charlotte: Independence Square Associates, 1975), p. 13.

[4] Timothy Clayton, "A Spurious 'Charlotte' Exposed," *Print Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (September 2008): pp.254-267.

[5] Clayton mentioned an instance with the portrait of Maria Clementina - newly married to the Jacobite Pretender - which was circulating widely in 1720, was copied from an image of Princess Louise Marie, the Pretender's younger sister.

queen were first revealed, artists portrayed Queen Charlotte as a petite blond, blue-eyed, Caucasian young lady, very similar to the George Pitt painting. The "spurious Charlotte" frenzy soon dried up after the genuine images of the queen appeared.

Though interest in the queen's image dwindled, interest in using the queen's name in Charlotte for political advancement grew. By the early 1770s, as the town grew, locals desired to establish a college for young Presbyterian men. County officers requested a charter from Parliament and King George III to approve the college. In hopes of gaining favor from the king to approve the charter, the county officers named the college "Queen's College." This was the second time the locals used the queen for a political purpose. Though at the time political tensions between the colonies and Great Britain were on the rise, the white civic leaders of Charlotte must have adored the queen enough to name the newly established college after Queen Charlotte, even if it was for political reasons. They built the college two blocks from the little courthouse near the center of Charlotte Town, at the corner of what is now Tryon and Third streets. The charter promised that the college would function according to "the Laws and Customs of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge or those of the Colleges in America." [6] In truth, the colonists planned to run it according to their own Presbyterian beliefs.

In March of 1772, however, in a report by the Committee of the Council for Plantation Affairs, Parliament and the king denied the charter for Queen's College.[7] According to historian Jack Claiborne, this charter did not suit the intolerant notions of royalty. He argued that George III refused to support any college not under the control of

[6] "Queen's College," *Mecklenburg Jeffersonian*, September 7, 1771, 3.
[7] "North Carolina: Report by the Committee of the Council for Plantation Affairs on Four Acts Passed in North Carolina in 1771." (England, March 1772), PC 1/3133, National Archives UK.

the Church of England. In this particular case, the king and Parliament perhaps felt the locals, who were mainly Presbyterians, would not run the college in accordance with the Church of England. In addition, an institution of higher learning run by an organization other than the Church of England could possibly encourage democratic, anti-royalist views.[8]

By this time, the college was up and running and the locals refused to shut it down. County officers gathered again and proposed amendments to allow the college to remain open, including a name change from "Queen's College" to the "Queen's Museum." Though the college members were frustrated, perhaps they chose to rename the college "Queen's Museum" to use Queen Charlotte as a symbol of political resistance, but to try and hide the college's real function and make it appear as a "less official" civic institution. During this time, it was unsafe to overtly show solidarity, unity, and defiance. Keeping the college open under her name allowed locals to show George III and Parliament that even as Presbyterians, they had good intentions and wanted to honor the king in doing so. Shortly afterwards, a royal proclamation repealed the amendments for the same reasons as before.[9]

The king's denial occurred on the tail end of what became famously known as the "War of Regulation." This movement, centered in North and South Carolina, was a vigilante protest launched by backcountry farmers who protested political corruption, taxation, and the imprisonment of debtors. This undertaking emphasized the demand of colonists that government be more responsive. After various periods of violence of

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[8] Jack Claiborne, William Price, Jr., and William Price, *Discovering North Carolina: A Tar Heel Reader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 165–79. Also see "Princeton of the South," *Our State Magazine*, July 1, 2010, ourstate.com/queens-college/

[9] Irvine R, "Davidson College, North Carolina," *The Southern Home*, July 21, 1873, Vol. 3, No. 181 edition, newspapers.com/image/67814432.

colonials towards the king's officers and the NC Government, North Carolina's first Governor, William Tryon, subsequently hanged seven Regulator leaders and required approximately 6,400 others to swear allegiance to the province of North Carolina. Following the hangings, the Battle of Alamance marked the collapse of the movement. Apathy lingered in the backcountry, particularly in towns such as Charlotte, and many families chose to move westward to distance themselves from the government.[10]

With tensions already high, the king's refusal must have been the nail in the coffin for Charlotteans. As a result, they opened the halls of the college to literary societies and political clubs where the fate of the colonies was hotly debated. It was at the college, some historians believe, that the first discussions were held that led to the adoption of a Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775. Most of the academic historical community dismisses the signing of the "Meck Dec" as a myth. The widely held view is that the Mecklenburg Declaration is a fairy tale, but nonetheless it continues to arouse strong passions. [11]

Just over a year later, after the American colonies declared independence from Great Britain, the Legislature in North Carolina stripped Queen's College of its royal title and bestowed on it a name befitting the mood of the country: Liberty Hall Academy. Liberty Hall continued to succeed. Though the town remained under the name of Charlotte, it was evident that the queen and her royal title provided no favors to the town. She was no longer politically significant. Liberty and freedom were the new identities.

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[10] Steven Danver, *Revolts, Protests, Demonstrations, and Rebellions in American History : An Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 169–74.
[11] Scott Syfert, *First American Declaration of Independence? The Disputed History of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775* (North Carolina: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2014), 1.

This type of political action shifting from monarchial culture to republicanism became common across the colonies.[12] Visions and examples of collective rights and individual responsibilities in the name of liberty appeared all over, including liberty trees, liberty poles, and liberty bells. Each example represented a region, its people, and their undesirable experience with Parliament and the King. They were also political instruments to unite communities. A perfect example of liberty as a political instrument was the Loyal Nine and the liberty tree in Boston. In response to the newly passed Stamp Act, the Loyal Nine, a group of locally born Patriots, hung an effigy from an elm tree that represented the body of Andrew Oliver, a Boston merchant who agreed to collect the Stamp Act taxes. Beside the body was a boot "stuffed with representation," according to one eyewitness.[13] This boot was a visual pun on the Earl of Bute, a Scottish aristocrat many thought was behind the Stamp Tax. Following the discovery of their effigy, crowds in Boston formed, celebrating their actions by parading in the streets. Over time, the actions of the Loyal Nine became symbolic of "liberty" and "property." This group eventually multiplied and became the Sons of Liberty. On September 11, 1765, they met in celebration beneath their tree and fastened a copper plate on its trunk with words in gold, "The Liberty Tree." As a symbol of liberty and its classical sense of separation, the Liberty Tree instantly became a Boston institution. The open space beneath its branches became known as "Liberty Hall" and used for many purposes, public and private. This idea of liberty spread like wild fire throughout the colonies and into Charlotte Town.[14] Like the Loyal Nine and the Liberty Tree, the Meck Dec and ridding the queen's name

[12] Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992), 110–60.
[13] David Fischer, *Liberty and Freedom: A Visual History of America's Founding Ideas* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24.
[14] Ibid., 21–23.

from Queen's College were one of Charlotte's liberty movements to show distaste with the King's actions.

Liberty Hall in Charlotte continued to flourish until 1780, following its possession by British troops. In 1820, local white elites made an effort to resuscitate the college, under the name "Western College," but it proved unsuccessful. The next effort by Robert Hall Morrison, a Charlotte native and reverend, proved successful after a group of white, elite Presbyterians supported his charter to reconstruct the college on its present footing. William Lee Davidson donated the 400 acres of land to support the charter's desires. As a result, the once Queen's College became today's "Davidson College."[15]

Shortly following the onset of the Revolution, Charlotteans, particularly white elites and working class members, contributed to movements that became pivotal in the development of traditions and memories of the history of Charlotte. They adopted the nickname "Hornets' Nest" by General Cornwallis, and helped defeat the British at the Battle of Kings Mountain. Meanwhile, the economy flourished. The arrival of cotton farming significantly impacted Charlotte's growth. As early as 1802, Mecklenburg County led the entire state of North Carolina in number of cotton gins. The county also produced wheat and corn. By the 1850s, Mecklenburg County stood near the top of North Carolina agriculture in nearly every crop except tobacco.[16]

This structure of opportunity shaped Mecklenburg's society as well. The county's agriculture based economy contributed to slave-owning farmers. More than 800 households owned between one and twenty slaves leading up to the Civil War. Though

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[15] R, "Davidson College, North Carolina."
[16] Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975.*, 16-18.

African Americans and farmers made up ninety-nine percent of Charlotte's population, it was not a society of equals. Rather, the social and political power of the area rested firmly in the hands of wealthy planters and townsmen. As a result, Mecklenburg County was far from a democracy. Women could not yet vote, nor could freed blacks. Only white men owning substantial amounts of land could fully participate in government.

As time progressed in Charlotte's history, evidence suggested that white elites shaped the memory of the city's past and of Queen Charlotte.[17] According to Howard Schuman and Cheryl Rieger, "if political and cultural elites find a memory of the past worth recollecting, the rest of society will regard the memory as useful and understand its relevance to present conditions and alternatives."[18] Early commemoration ceremonies associated with the Mecklenburg Declaration in Charlotte reflected white elite control. On May 20th, 1825, the people of Charlotte held a celebration ceremony for the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration. The Committee of Arrangement, consisting of male elites such as Isaac Alexander and William J. Polk, planned the ceremony to be elaborate and nationalistic, but emotional in reflecting the hardships during the Revolution.[19] Though all Charlotteans were invited, the day ended with a dinner specifically for Charlotte elite hosted by Dr. Henderson of Davidson College. Many other residents in Charlotte, however, still took much pride in the Mecklenburg Declaration celebrations. A Charlottean, Ms. Suzanna Smart, who claimed

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[17] Wealthy planters (consisting of slaveholders) and townsmen made up the approximately one percent of Charlotte's population. This minority held considerable power over the middling farmers and townsmen (twenty-four percent), yeoman farmers and landless whites (thirty-five percent), and African Americans (forty percent), see Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975.*

[18] Howard Schuman and Cheryl Rieger, "Historical Analogies, Generational Effects, and Attitudes Toward War," *American Sociological Review*, American Sociological Association, 57, no. 3 (June 1992): 315–26.

[19] "20th May, 1775," *Catawba Journal*, May 10, 1825.

to witness the Declaration signing in 1775, said the celebrations were "the day of throwing up of hats." She argued that the love of country and liberty fired the hearts of all classes.[20]

White elites celebrated the Meck Dec as a more significant factor in Charlotte's history than the king and queen. *The North Carolina Star* described the event as a historic celebration of liberty that surpassed any other celebration ever witnessed in Charlotte. During the dinner, attendees made toasts, interspersed with patriotic songs and accompanied with discharges of cannon fire. One of the toasts particularly reflected why the "patriotic citizens of Mecklenburg" were right in absolving themselves from all allegiance to the king, queen, and Great Britain.[21]

In 1835, the elite of Charlotte planned another commemoration ceremony in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the Meck Dec signing, but this time, however, the elites honored Queen Charlotte. This moment was a pivotal shift in the memory of Queen Charlotte. Col. William J. Alexander, Braly Oates, and other elected officials led the planning for various parts of the ceremony.[22] This particular event reflected a similar structure to the 1825 ceremony, but thousands attended instead of hundreds and it ended with a much larger dinner and a ball. The newspapers described the event as very patriotic and much less emotional than the 1825 ceremony. During the dinner hosted at the Charlotte Hotel, the host, Dr. Boyd, allowed each guest to toast to the occasion. While the majority of the toasts remembered the brave men of the Revolution or reflected patriotism, one toast addressed the memory of the king and queen. General Daniel

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[20] "A Carolina Woman of the Revolution: Susanna Smart," *Godey's Lady's Book*, March 1856, Accessible Archives, accessible-archives.com.librarylink.uncc.edu/.
[21] "Mecklenburg Independence Celebration," *The North Carolina Star*, April 16, 1825.
[22] "Mecklenburg Independence," *Fayetteville Weekly Observer*, May 31, 1835.

toasted, "to the Revolutionary Whigs of Mecklenburg and Charlotte—Who, in the true spirit of chivalry and gallantry, placed their feet upon the neck of George the Third, but warred not even with the name of his illustrious Queen."[23]

Daniel's speech suggested the memory of the queen changed during the sixty-year period. The bitter memories of the queen, particularly white elite, during the American Revolution no longer affected Charlotte's society on the same level as it had before. According to Kenneth Moss, because humans live in a time as well as in social and cultural 'space,' identity is defined by "significant experiences in the individual's own history: identity is in large part a product of past experience."[24] But at the same time, as people attempt to meet the needs of the present, their identities are reordered by external factors. Therefore, the past both shapes and is shaped by the present. As a general, Daniel understood that Queen Charlotte was never politically at fault. She was a woman and he knew women were not to involve themselves in politics. Her husband caused the political unrest, not her. With this belief and now less impacted by the revolution as those in previous generations, many residents perhaps now saw her as a queen and a woman worth remembering in Charlotte's history. This is likely why the memory of Queen Charlotte shifted between the 50th and 60th Meck Dec Anniversary celebrations. Over the next sixty years, Charlotte newspapers published stories about her time as a queen more frequently and similarities between her and Queen Victoria. The queen as a topic of interest was on the rise.

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[23] "20th of May 1775...In 1835," *Western Carolinian*, June 6, 1835.
[24] Kenneth Moss, "St. Patrick's Day Celebrations and the Formation of Irish-American Identity, 1845-1875.," *Journal of Social History* 29, no. 1 (1995): 6.

Charlotte's Women Anoint "Queen City"

Changes in the role of women influenced changing interpretations of Queen Charlotte during the end of the nineteenth century. These new interpretations were one of the significant key shifts in her memory in the region. The role of women in North Carolina, particularly Charlotte, has received little scholarly attention, as might be expected in eras of assumed female domesticity and limited, low status functions to which females were relegated. Over the years, however, women wove their spirits into local history. By the twentieth century, Charlotte natives set out to chronicle female accomplishments and embellish their role in Charlotte's history through the power of education and religion. Elite white women highlighted their appreciation of the queen in Charlotte's history, giving her a new memory for the city of Charlotte.

From the early nineteenth century through Reconstruction in Charlotte, traditional values centered on family, kin, and church shaped the lives of the majority of women in North Carolina, white and black alike. According to Margaret Smith and Emily Wilson, "the rise in opportunities for women occurred slowly in North Carolina, and the state was sometimes called the 'Rip Van Winkle state' for its reputation in being backward, undeveloped, and indifferent to its conditions." Under North Carolina law, sole authority rested with the master, husband, and father. By 1860, however, as Charlotte's population grew to over one thousand residents, Charlotte offered both white and black women volunteer and employment options. Particularly for white women, this was their first opportunity to step outside of the home and claim a place in the public life. Through this

outside work, many women developed organizational skills that served them when the Civil War came. [25]

As opportunities for work outside the home increased for women, did educational opportunity. Between 1820 and 1860, almost three hundred academies, many exclusively female, were established across the state, including the Charlotte Female Institute, Elizabeth College, and Scotia Seminary (attended by young black women). The Charlotte Female Institute later adapted the name "Queens College" in 1913. The College Board adopted this name to commemorate Queen's Museum and to honor Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg. Advocates of Queen's College declared that the name harmonized with the community's traditional names, history, and memory.[26]

The rise of education had a dramatic impact on women's lives. By 1860, four out of five women and one of every two free black women in the state were literate.[27] Being educated produced a major change in women's expectations and perspectives and affected both their domestic relations and their relationship to public life. An educated woman could reasonably expect a more companionate marriage because she could relate more as an equal to her similarly educated husband on a variety of topics—from politics to literature. This Republican-era ideology supported education as a function of government—educated citizens make better voters and maintain a stable social order. [28] Though such thinking was hard to sell in rural North Carolina, towns such as Charlotte embraced it.

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[25] Margaret Smith and Emily Wilson, *North Carolina Women: Making History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 75.
[26] "Queen's College Is Institutions Name," *The Evening Chronical*, February 25, 1913, Charlotte Evening Chronical edition.
[27] Jean Straub, "Benjamin Rush's Views on Women's Education," *Pennsylvania History* 34 (1967): 147–57.
[28] Smith and Wilson, *North Carolina Women: Making History*, 92.

In addition, the Civil War years brought opportunities for many women. With men gone, women became head of households and obtained new, if temporary, sources of identity and power. Women appeared in public places previously forbidden, such as railroad depots. They traveled more, went longer distances, and often without a male escort, mainly to visit relatives in the military, but sometimes as refugees. These rights, however, were designated to white women. Although the war freed African Americans, it did not change a racist social system in which they were considered inferior and subordinate. Nevertheless, for black women, the war's end did bring an awareness of freedom, opportunity, and promise. Families reunited, couples legally married, and people could come and go at will.[29]

These events that influenced change in the roles of women provided an opportunity for five young, single white women of Charlotte to celebrate local female contributions. In 1896, the *Charlotte Observer*, with the enthusiastic aid of Observer's editor, J.P. Caldwell, allowed a group of five women representing the "Woman's Auxiliary of Charlotte" to write a declaration edition for the 20th of May celebration. The *Charlotte Observer* reported that the paper was to contain information regarding the religious, educational, historical, social, and manufacturing interests of Charlotte and Mecklenburg county—past, present, and future. To successfully do this, the five women infiltrated the newspapers' male domain. Reporters seemed "unruffled by the unaccustomed presence of women in the office."[30] Mamie Bays edited the edition with the aid of Sallie Whisnant, business manager; Eva Liddell, advertising; Adele Brenizer,

[29] Michele Gillespie and Sally McMillen, *North Carolina Women: Their Lives and Times*, Vol.2 (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2015).
[30] Mary Kratt, *The New South Women: Twentieth-Century Women of Charlotte, North Carolina* (Charlotte: John F. Blair, 2001), 4.

circulation; and Lauara Wadsworth, illustration. The *Charlotte Observer* later reported that "people may look for the best edition of any paper ever issued in North Carolina, and one of the best ever issued in the South."[31]

For the first time in a newspaper since 1835, the women authors individually highlighted and praised Queen Charlotte as a significant figure in the city's history. In the edition, the authors described Queen Charlotte as "a woman who was a beautiful princess that the locals of Charlotte were happy to embrace and honor by using her name."[32] The edition described the significant role her name had in the establishment of Queen's College (Queen's Museum) and throughout the paper, the nick name "Queen City" appeared consistently. Though the term "Queen City" generally was a title given to large, dominant cities in a region that were not a capital, people of Charlotte gave the city this name in honor of the queen. Up to this point in newspapers, the "Queen City" usually referred to Cincinnati, Ohio, or Charleston, South Carolina. Once these women used "Queen City" to refer to Charlotte in their newspaper, there was a dramatic increase in other newspapers and businesses that quickly grasped the name and applied it. These women started Charlotte's "Queen City" trend.

In addition to Queen Charlotte, this first women's edition of the *Observer* ambitiously set out to chronicle some of the accomplishments of local women and their contributions to various fields. Women's achievements, wit and humor, music and art, literature and religion were featured along with a photo of Charlotte's first women cyclist and her bicycle. Ironically, the women's edition was a money-making project to benefit

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[31] "Woman's 20th of May Edition. Editors and Their Assignments," *Charlotte Observer,* April 21, 1896, 4.
[32] "Women's Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Edition," *The Charlotte Observer,* May 20, 1896, Women's Edition, 3.

the Young Men's Christian Association and the Women's Auxiliary. They cleared $706.25. [33]

"Women's Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Edition," indeed, was a huge success. Shortly following the 20th of May celebration, newspapers all over North Carolina praised the women's work and success of the edition. Charleston, South Carolina's newspaper reported that if the editor of the *Charlotte Observer* "should leave his paper in the hands of Editor Bays and take a vacation, we are sure that the readers of the *Charlotte Observer* would not suffer by his absence, and we are sure that we could pay him no higher compliment."[34] The desire to highlight the memory of Queen Charlotte, her significance to Charlotte history, and other significant women of Charlotte and their achievements allowed women to truly leave their mark on Charlotte history in their own way. Literary scholar Kathryn McKee wrote that women's southern literature reflects a level of "writing actively engaged in self-representation, actively engaged in preserving region from the homogenizing sway of nation."[35] Perhaps the allowance of women by men to highlight the importance of other women in Charlotte history reflected the shifting attitude of gender relations in Charlotte and the openness towards women's literacy. With the rise of women's education, it became more acceptable for women to publish works.[36] This work revealed the growing inclination of women to present their contributions to national progress as distinct from yet equal to those of remarkable men.

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[33] Kratt, *The New South Women: Twentieth-Century Women of Charlotte, North Carolina*, 6.
[34] "Women Who Are Newspaper Men Right," *Charlotte Observer*, May 27, 1896, 2.
[35] Carolyn Perry and Mary Louise Weaks, *The History of Southern Women's Literature*, 1st ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 176.
[36] Julie Des Jardins, *Women and the Historical Enterprise in America: Gender, Race, and the Politics of Memory, 1880-1945*, 1st ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 205.

Memories of her as simply an “illustrious” queen now shifted to a memory influenced by feminism. This new memory not only highlighted Queen Charlotte as a good wife and mother, but she was a powerful figure that did amazing charity works for her people, such as establishing hospitals, orphanages, and public gardens. Through the work of these five women, Queen Charlotte became a powerful activist symbol to many other local women. She was now remembered as a woman who achieved many great things, even under a powerful husband.

CHAPTER 2: TWENTIETH CENTURY THROUGH TODAY

Queen Charlotte as a Symbol of the White New South

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women of Charlotte and local elites shifted the memory of Queen Charlotte again in written works and city celebrations. Particularly during the Great War, Queen Charlotte became the city's "Lady Liberty," representing local and national pride. As the "Women's Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence Edition" revived the popularity of Charlotte's history and the memory of Queen Charlotte amongst locals, especially the elites, she became a figure many locals could not ignore. This revival of her memory, however, led to debates about the queen's race that highlighted racial tensions brewing within the city and country at large.

By the turn of the century, the city of Charlotte continued on the road to economic success. The South's brightest economic prospects no longer existed in the countryside, in the old plantation districts built on slavery, but in dynamic towns and cities like Charlotte, built on railroads, commerce, and fledgling industry.[37] However, the broader social and political order did not accommodate such a peaceful transition. Black and white townspeople struggled in the aftermath of abolition to redefine their relationship. To many whites, the migration of ex-slaves from the countryside to towns and cities seemed hectic and pointless. But many blacks migrated to Charlotte with clear intentions and like white southerners in the new order, new cities were the best places to make a

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[37] Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte, 1850-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 39-41.

new start. Though the years following emancipation challenged both races with segregation and social inequality, Charlotte's blacks and whites continued to strive for economic advancement and build up their own community organizations.

The 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century were tragic years for blacks and working class whites in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Events such as fraudulent elections, the defeat of Populism, and the passing of Jim Crow laws intensified racial and class antipathies that persist until the present day. Wealthy white businessmen were in virtual control of all public affairs. "Most major urban decisions in the early twentieth century," writes historian Blaine A. Brownell in his study of the New South cities, "and the conceptual context within which these decisions were made, can be traced directly to the socio-economic elite group." Seeing themselves as defenders of order against unruly blacks and unreliable mill workers, the "commercial civic elite" used their political preeminence to reshape the physical form of Charlotte into a network of homogenous districts. [38]

Daniel A. Tompkins, from Edgefield, South Carolina, was one of Charlotte's elite members who strove for Charlotte's economic advancement. After moving to Charlotte in the 1870s, he established the cotton mill industry in the local area through his "cotton-mill campaign." [39] He also played a significant role in Charlotte's political affairs. Tompkins purchased the *Charlotte Observer* and set about promoting the town much as people in other interior cities of the South were doing. Passionate about the growth of Charlotte, Tompkins made it a personal priority to record Charlotte's rapidly changing

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[38] Dan Morrill, *Historic Charlotte: An Illustrated History of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County*. (San Antonio: Historical Pub. Network, 2001), 62.
[39] William Graves and Heather Smith, *Charlotte, NC: The Global Evolution of a New South City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 12.

economy and society. Tompkins was one of the first writers of the twentieth century to publish a thorough history of Mecklenburg County. In his 1903 three-volume work, *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte,* Tompkins thematically described how Charlotte changed from a small trading town in the mid-1700s to one of the largest manufacturing cities of the South.

In his book, Tompkins reinforced the white elites' control over the queen's image when he addressed Queen Charlotte's significance to the city and how city locals remembered her. In Chapter one, Tompkins provided a descriptive history of Mecklenburg and the establishment of Charlotte Town, addressing Queen Charlotte's relation to the city's history. Tompkins defined Queen Charlotte as "loved by the people" who were happy to name their new county Mecklenburg in her honor and the new small town Charlotte. To provide readers a visual insight on Queen Charlotte's character, Tompkins included a mini portrait of Queen Charlotte within the chapter (*Figure 1)* that appeared to be a younger representation of her based on Thomas Gainsborough's *The Royal Family* portrait, 1782-3. In this portrait, Tompkins' displayed Queen Charlotte as a young Caucasian who was petite, with a thin nose, small lips, and strawberry blond hair. D.A. Tompkins did not provide a source for this particular image. In Gainsborough's original painting, Queen Charlotte appeared older with grey hair and pale skin, but was wearing a similar outfit. As a member Charlotte's elite, Tompkins wanted his readers to believe this image reflected how the colonists may have viewed the Queen—a loving, beautiful, white woman. Tompkins' image of Queen Charlotte became so popular amongst many elites that newspapers advertised that every local should have her portrait

within their household.[40] This image and reputation of Queen Charlotte continued to define her over the next few years.[41]

In 1909, the significance of Queen Charlotte to the city's history resurfaced again for the 134th Anniversary of the 20th of May. Charlotte's elite clubs and organizations came together to plan this event as they always had. For this occasion, President William Taft arranged to visit the Queen City. In preparation for the anniversary and the President's arrival, city members planned three days of celebration full of parties, parades, reenactments of the signing of the Meck Dec, and music festivals. The *Evening Chronicle* described these events as "blazes of glory that transformed the great and glorious city."[42] In particular, the organizers of the colonial parade provided a particular image of Queen Charlotte to the people of Mecklenburg. The first float of the parade was known as the "Queen Charlotte" float. This was the first time in Charlotte's history that Queen Charlotte was included in the Mecklenburg Declaration celebration parade. This individual float was fourteen feet in length, designed to represent the American eagle, and completely trimmed in gold. On the float, a young white girl, Miss Julia Alexander, played the role of the queen. She was dressed in a red, white, and blue flowing gown, with blond hair and blue eyes. Twelve young, Caucasian ladies surrounded her also dressed in red, white, and blue. Altogether, the women represented the thirteen colonies.[43]

This float represented the white elite's control over Queen Charlotte's memory to the city's inhabitants. This same float, along with the same women, continued to appear

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[40] "Charlotte," *The Charlotte Observer*, January 30, 1902.
[41] D.A. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte: From 1740 to 1903* (Observer Print House, 1903), 28.
[42] "Great Celebration Opens with a Fury of Trumpets," *The Evening Chronicle*, May 18, 1909, 1.
[43] "Colonial Parade," *The Charlotte News*, May 20, 1909, 2.

in anniversary parades over the next few years. Following the "Queen Charlotte" float was the "Declaration Float" that consisted of fourteen men, all descendants of the original signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration. The order of the floats reflected Charlotte's history and its progression, but it made the queen's current reputation apparent. The new generation of white elites in the county of Mecklenburg embraced Queen Charlotte as a part of their history and with patriotism. The mayor pro tem of Charlotte at the time, Joseph Garibaldi, described the culture of the city by saying, "Charlotte is such a progressive and beautiful city. Its history is, of course, familiar to the people who live here. It is because she started right by naming the town for a woman, a princess, and a queen—Queen Charlotte."[44]

The Mecklenburg Declaration celebrations were "seedbeds of virtue" that allowed Charlotteans to celebrate their heritage. Collective memory, whose content this holiday sustained, referred to the social distribution of beliefs, feelings, and moral judgments Charlotte had for its past. Since 1909, Meck Dec celebrations consistently included Queen Charlotte because over time, white elites accepted that she played just as an important role in the shaping of Charlotte's history as the Meck Dec did.[45] In addition, it is possible that the white elites included Queen Charlotte more elaborately in Meck Dec ceremonies in their quest to maintain power. Eric Hobsbawm has observed that from the 1870s onward, "the rise of electoral democracy in Europe and America meant the masses could no longer be relied upon to follow their masters; therefore, rulers and middle-class observers rediscovered the importance of 'irrational' [ritualistic] elements in maintenance

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[44] "T.P.A's. Are In Convention: President B.H. Marsh Made Annual Report at Opening Session--The Delegates Present--Other Notes," *The Charlotte News*, April 23, 1909, Three O'Clock edition.
[45] Barry Schwartz, "Collective Memory and Abortive Commemoration: Presidents' Day and the American Holiday Calendar," *The New School*, Social Research, 75, no. 1 (2008): 76.

of the social fabric and social order."[46] This became known as the "conflict model" in regards to holidays and celebrations. Even "by the latter part of the twentieth century," John Bodnar declared, "America's public memory remained a product of elite manipulation, symbolic interaction, and contested discourse."[47] Therefore, it is likely that the white elites emphasized the queen to demonstrate the wealth and power whites always held within the city.

This common representation of Queen Charlotte grew in popularity in anniversary celebrations and businesses in Mecklenburg County. At the turn of the twentieth century, many souvenirs sold during the celebrations highlighted Queen Charlotte. By 1916, in the midst of war, Queen Charlotte souvenirs and branded items featured her as a fair-skinned goddess wearing a long, flowing gown. Queen Charlotte became the city's "lady liberty" (*Figure 2*). This interesting contrast shows the one-eighty turn white elites had for Queen Charlotte. One-hundred and forty years after the renaming of "Queen's College" to "Liberty Hall" to reflect hatred towards royalty and praise for liberty, the opposite occurred. White elites now associated Queen Charlotte *with* liberty. The historical memory of liberty to the people of Charlotte took on a new meaning. During this time in Charlotte and across the nation, a commitment to social justice emerged simultaneously as one of the more prominent characteristics of Progressive thought, and provided (as a kind of dividend) fresh attention to the concept of liberty and justice. Both the idealism that accompanied US participation in the First World War as well as the critical pessimism stimulated by the Great Depression helped to encourage this general trend in

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[46] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263.
[47] John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 20.

American thought.[48] In the eyes of white elites, Queen Charlotte became the symbol of Progressivism in the city. This also demonstrated white elites accepting women as part of that progression.

An influx of businesses and clubs used the title of "Queen Charlotte" to advertise their business and products, especially to emphasize its "localness." For example, the *Stone and Barringer Company*, booksellers of Charlotte, advertised and sold Queen Charlotte merchandise for over a decade.[49] The company even named their circulating library the "Queen Charlotte Library." In 1913, *The Greater Charlotte Club* published a "beautiful and illustrious" pamphlet on the progress and advantages of living in Charlotte. The title of the pamphlet was "Queen Charlotte."[50] Other popular businesses included *Queen Charlotte Ink, Queen Charlotte Printing*, and *Queen Charlotte Clothing*.[51] Her namesake doubled in newspapers and events compared to the decades before. Many locals of Charlotte embraced the nickname of "Queen City" or simply referred to the city as "Queen Charlotte."

As the popularity of Queen Charlotte grew, so did her prominence in planning within Charlotte. White elite members of society wanted to name streets in her honor. At the dawn of the twentieth century, the urban and suburban planning profession bloomed in the United States, drawing from three intellectual streams of the day. One was the conservation movement, which promoted the idea of people being closer to nature. The second was artful public architecture and graciously designed civic spaces that would

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[48] Michael Kammen, *Spheres of Liberty: Changing Perceptions of Liberty in American Culture* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2001), 139–41.
[49] Examples of these advertisements can be seen in *The Charlotte News* from 1909-1919. *Queen Charlotte Ink* had an advertisement in at least three daily newspapers a week during this period.
[50] "Queen Charlotte," *The State Journal,* August 8, 1913.
[51] See *The Charlotte Observer* between 1900 and 1910.

bring citizens together. The Progressive movement inspired the third stream. This movement helped cities deal with technical and social problems looming within. For white elites in Charlotte, this social 'problem' included the desire for segregation from other races and classes. John Nolan, an architect who worked closely with Charlotte elite, believed that planning for particular uses in particular areas enhanced stability and gave property owners peace-of-mind about their investments. In other words, the architect's plan for Charlotte's expansion of the suburbs meant a city with a place for everyone and everyone in their place. With Nolan as a lead architect, planners created "segregated fine resident sections, free from objectionable features" to house the city's wealthiest residents. These new neighborhoods were Myers Park and the Dilworth Extension. The owner of the 1,200 acres where the new neighborhoods were built, George Stephens, named two roads in honor of Queen Charlotte, *Queens Road* and *Queens Road West*. [52]

The naming of these streets after the queen was part of a larger movement in the city by the elites to affirm the traditional, white-dominated conceptions of Charlotte's past and the memory of the queen belonged to the elites of Charlotte. [53] According to geographer Derek H. Alderman, memorial landscapes and spaces play a central role in shaping how the public values, identifies, and debates the past. In particular, commemorative street names, like other places of memory, are active participants in the construction and perception of social and political reality. When naming the two new roads, not only did Stephens want to reflect the city's history and the queen as a popular

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[52] Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975*., 168-169.
[53] Derek Alderman, "Street Names and the Scaling of Memory: The Politics of Commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. within the African American Community," *Royal Geographical Society* 35, no. 2 (June 2003): 1.

figure, he also wanted the new areas to be associated with wealth and beauty, which in his mind reflected white elites such as himself.

In addition, Stephens wanted high quality education to be associated with Myers Park. Stephens enticed the local women's school, Presbyterian College, later renamed *Queen's College*, to relocate to a prime site in the heart of Myers Park. According to Queens University of Charlotte, the school named itself *Queen's College* for three reasons: "at the request of the Alumnae Association to disarm prejudice in deference to other Presbyterian colleges which claimed an equal right to the denominational name; to commemorate Queen's Museum, a classical school established in Charlotte in 1771; and to honor Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg."[54] As a result of these new suburban territories, Queen Charlotte's image became a status symbol for the elite of the city.

[54] "History of Queen's College," accessed January 15, 2016, queens.edu/About-Queens/Get-to-Know-Queens/History-of-Queens.html.

Queen Charlotte's Image and Race Debated

By the end of the 1920s, Charlotte's commercial-civic elite controlled the political arena. When visiting Charlotte in 1926, economist Edgar Thompson said, "The social structure of the city is extremely conservative, with well-understood class distinctions." Starting with the New Deal in the 1930s, the federal government began funding projects within the city. The local government channeled much of the money, pushing municipalities to become more and more active. New Deal construction grants, public housing and middle-class mortgage programs, highway aid, urban renewal, and even tax breaks for shopping center construction all provided unprecedented power to reshape cities. In Charlotte, as in other Southern cities, "the result was a notable sharpening of race and class segregation during the era of the federal city." [55] Local blacks advocated for economic self-sufficiency and political rights even though the white community was clear with their intentions. One prominent black leader from the Charlotte region was Frederick Douglas Alexander. With assistance from the New Deal, Alexander registered many black Charlotteans to vote. Alexander was a founding member of the Citizens' Committee for Political Action, an organization established in 1932 to increase political participation by African Americans.[56] Alexander was an example of an African American who influenced political ideologies beyond those of the white elites within the city.

On into the 1920s, however, much like before, white elites shaped the memory and image of Queen Charlotte. In 1925, during the sesquicentennial of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, a local elite author, Thomas Wood Stevens, published

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[55] Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975*, 222-224.
[56] Morrill, *Historic Charlotte: An Illustrated History of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County.*, 89.

Historic Mecklenburg and Old Charlotte: 1775-1925, a work that described Queen Charlotte's connection to the city's history. [57] He provided his readers with the mature portrait of Queen Charlotte painted by Thomas Gainsborough (*Figure 3).* Shortly after Stevens published his work, the city of Charlotte's historical committee (consisting only of white elites) sponsored his work to be performed as a pageant for the sesquicentennial anniversary. The printed pageant booklet for guests featured Thomas Gainsborough's image of her.[58] This image also appeared on other souvenirs during the celebration (*Figure 4).* Though Tompkins' younger image of the queen remained popular, the mature image of her gained significant popularity, likely because many elites enjoyed the idea of their city's symbol looking mature and wealthy.

This image of Queen Charlotte began to shift during the last half of the same decade when a German historian and scholar, Brunold Springer, argued that the multiple paintings of Queen Charlotte, including Thomas Gainsborough's image, being light-skinned, blue-eyed, and blond, were flawed. This interpretation challenged the work of those critics and elites who had long assumed that Queen Charlotte was purely white. In his published work, *Racial Mixture as the Basic Principle of Life*, Springer argued that based on the mixed Portuguese bloodline of Queen Charlotte, these paintings were not a true depiction of Queen Charlotte. After researching first-hand accounts of those who interacted with the queen, Springer described Charlotte as having "broad nostrils and heavy lips of the blond Negroid type."[59] He argued that even though she was not the most attractive of royal blood, this mix of race was not uncommon in Nordic Europe.

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[57] Thomas Wood Stevens, *Historic Mecklenburg and Old Charlotte: 1775-1925* (Charlotte: Queen City Printing Company, 1925), 25.
[58] "The Pageant of Charlotte and Old Mecklenburg: 1775-1925." (The Queen City Printing Company, 1925), Carolina Room.
[59] Ibid.

Nonetheless, he concluded that the written accounts of those who saw the queen needed to be trusted more than the paintings.[60]

The challenge to Queen Charlotte's perceived whiteness gained further impetus from the writings of Joel Augustus Rogers. A Jamaican-American author, journalist, and amateur historian, Rogers addressed Queen Charlotte's race and her significance to black history. In his work *Sex and Race, Volume 1: Negro-Caucasian Mixing in All Ages and All Lands,* Rogers challenged prevailing ideas about race, demonstrated the connections between civilizations, and traced African achievements. He referenced and agreed with Springer that those of European and African descent had been mixing all over Europe from the "dimmest antiquity."[61] In regards to Queen Charlotte, Rogers argued that the only artist who ever painted her as her true self was Allan Ramsay (*Figure 5*), who captured the Queen as a true mulatto. In the first half of the 20th century, Rogers made many significant contributions to black print culture. As a self-taught historian, however, he received little recognition among university-trained historians because of his race and credentials. Regardless, Rogers' popularity amongst blacks grew. His commitment to race vindication research, especially in national black newspapers, inspired the younger generation to advocate for black rights and their role in history. During the opening of "Freedom Schools" in the south, Rogers' work inspired students to publish their own newspapers, where they reported on civil rights activities taking place and offered their own perspectives on the importance of becoming involved in "the Movement." Rogers'

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[60] Brunold Springer, *Racial Mixture as the Basic Principle of Life* (Berlin: 1929).
[61] J.A. Rogers, *Sex and Race, Volume 1: Negro-Caucasian Mixing in All Ages and All Lands—The Old World* (Wesleyan University Press, 2014), 288.

intellectual influence gave young people the desire to communicate to others the significance of the struggle for black civil rights over time.[62]

By the 1930s, hints continued in books, paintings, and newspaper articles that whites and blacks were questioning Queen Charlotte's race. Especially during the movement of black rights sweeping across the nation and black newspapers widely emerging, it appeared that Rogers' work and opinion of the queen made it to Charlotte. During the call for black civil liberties, many blacks preached independence from society (either physically, culturally or psychologically), emphasizing collective action of African Americans based on shared heritage and common concerns.[63] Many local elites were in denial that a black queen would ever be the symbol for a white dominated city. White elites in Charlotte called on historians to solve the mystery and answer the question once and for all: was Queen Charlotte black and not white? This notion of identity was not only important to the individuals who celebrated her, but to the city as a whole. If the queen was of black ancestry, as a symbol she would provide a whole new meaning in local commemoration. Especially for the black community, she would become a symbol of pride and recognition that many blacks, too, can be as refined and do great things like the queen. Or perhaps even if historians proved her to be black, white elites would find a way to vanquish it.

With white and black political and economic tensions on the rise, the identity of Queen Charlotte was one of many factors that fostered continued racial friction in

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[62] V.P. Franklin, "Introduction—To Be Heard In Black And White: Historical Perspectives On Black Print Culture," *The Journal of African American History* 95, no. 3–4 (2010): 291–95.
[63] Mark Soloman, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917-1936* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1998).

Charlotte. White elites remained insistent that Queen Charlotte was indeed white, while middle-class blacks outside of the city claimed her mulatto features proved otherwise. Local amateur historian and Mint Museum director, Mary Dwelle, addressed the queen's race debate in a 1934 *Charlotte Observer* article. Dwelle provided a thorough biography of Queen Charlotte, her relation to the city, and an explanation of her debated image. She began her article with Queen Charlotte's reputation for not being very beautiful. Dwelle argued that Queen Charlotte was not quite as attractive as the "modern queens." She claimed, however, that regardless of beauty, "information about how the city was named for her, why the locals should love her, her life, character, various portraits, her favorite home, and a few other things concerning her, regardless of her ethnic background, may prove to be interesting."[64] To provide readers a visual of Queen Charlotte, Dwelle published the same Thomas Gainsborough painting of Queen Charlotte used by Stevens.

Dwelle argued that though she was not purely African, Queen Charlotte did have mulatto features. Based on a description by Horace Walpole, a witness to the queen's coronation, the queen was short, pale, and very thin. Her hair was dark and fine, her forehead low, her nose thin, except her nostrils were wide and so was her mouth. As a result, Dwelle believed the portrait painted by an American artist, Benjamin West, was the best likeness of the Queen based (*Figure 6)*. Dwelle referenced another local historian, Roger Fulford, "an authority on the subject," who believed the same. Dwelle argued that though there were more than forty paintings, miniatures, engravings, and pottery makings of the queen, there should be a copy of her image in every public building, in the homes of locals, and used as mementoes by visitors in the city of

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[64] Mary Dwelle, "Introducing Queen Charlotte: Woman of Noble Character, Wife of King George III," *Charlotte Observer,* October 7, 1934 (Sunday Edition).

Charlotte. Locals should be proud of the queen and her significance to Charlotte's history, regardless of her race.[65] Shortly after her article was published, a local artist, Eugene Thomason, became inspired to paint a portrait of Queen Charlotte based off of Benjamin West's painting.[66] Locals knew Thomason to paint landscapes and portraits, as they were "perceived by the people." In this case, "people" referred to the white elites and white middle class. Thomason painted Queen Charlotte with a very petite nose, blond hair, and blue eyes.

Another local historian, Lillian F. Crosland, emphasized why the queen remained sacred to the people of Charlotte. Crosland published an article exactly one month later in the same newspaper as Dwelle, but focused on the impact of women throughout Charlotte's history and how city inhabitants recognized them over the years. She discussed Queen Charlotte's continued influence on the city's history, including why the city named the new town in her honor and how her namesake continued to flourish. In addition, addressing the recent debates over her race, Crosland agreed with Fulford and Dwelle that West's painting was "considered the best likeness of the Queen." Next to her article, Crosland published Thomason's completed portrait of the Queen for the first time. However, it appeared that Thomason altered Queen Charlotte's features slightly. Though the newspaper print was not the clearest (and the original has proved difficult to trace), in his painting, she appeared more white than black. Thomason featured the queen with

[65]Dwell, "Introducing Queen Charlotte," 2.
[66] In 1772, George III appointed Benjamin West as Historical Painter. West was presumably encouraged to paint portraits of the royal family in a style rather formal and faintly unsuitable, not improved by poor likenesses. The King also requested him not to paint the Queen too intimately.

brown eyes, but her nose and lips appeared much thinner (*Figure 7)* and her skin whiter.[67]

It is likely that Thomason wanted Queen Charlotte to be of the white race because of his own personal bias. A product of the industrialized New South, Thomason made the obligatory pilgrimage to New York to advance his art education and launch his career. He returned to the South in the early 1930s, living first in Charlotte before settling in a small Appalachian crossroads town called Nebo.[68] Thomason embraced southern culture and convincingly portrayed multiple southern regions in his paintings, which highlighted white culture. When Thomason painted the queen, he overemphasized white features (petite nose, fair skin), as if he tried to hide any mulatto features that appeared in previous paintings. This small occurrence highlighted and reinforced the racial tensions within the city during this era.

By the 1940s, events and memorabilia within the city continued to portray the queen as a petite, white blond. Though her uncertain image may have provided a glimmer of hope to the blacks and other minorities in the 1920s and 1930s, white elites continued to run the majority of businesses and large events within the city. At times, the elite hushed the queen's debated ethnicity and kept her in their image. For example, for the 1948 Mec Dec celebration, a local, well-educated white playwright, LeGette Blythe, wrote a play entitled *Shout Freedom*! that ran for two weeks at the Southern States Fairground. Thousands of people attended each performance. When describing the history of Charlotte Town, the narrator's lines emphasized that Queen Charlotte was a

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[67] Lillian Crosland, "Women's Courage Praised" *Charlotte Observer*. November 7, 1934, Junior League edition.
[68] Martha Severens, *From New York to Nebo: The Artistic Journey of Eugene Thomason* (Spartanburg: The University of South Carolina Press, 2014).

"blond German princess," as if to stamp out any rumors of the queen being otherwise.[69] Led by the all-white Mecklenburg Historical Society, the cast of 160 people took the play on the road and visited over forty-four US cities, where thousands of men, women, and children had the opportunity to see it.

Racial tensions within the city peaked during the 1950s and 1960s. The political culture of Charlotte changed, largely because of integration of public facilities and businesses, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the successful integration, though limited, of the local public schools in 1957. It was during this era, sometimes called America's "Second Civil War," white supremacy initiatives of the 1890s began to give way to new arrangements, both politically and socially, reopening the debate on the queen's race.[70]

In July of 1966, an incident at the Mint Museum involving Queen Charlotte's image caused racial tension within the city. Vandals slashed the portrait of the queen by Allan Ramsay across her face. This first deliberate act of vandalism in the museum's thirty-year history left the 200-year old portrait bearing a two-inch scar from Queen Charlotte's left eye to the left nostril (*Figure 8*). The museum director at the time, Robert Schlageter, stated a group of "culturally deprived youths" made racist comments before slicing the picture across the queen's face. [71] This was the first time in the city's history that locals attacked the queen's image because of her portrayed race. Following what appeared as a hate crime to many in city, a local artist, Hans Gassman, reached out to

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[69] LeGette Blythe, "Shout Freedom!" (Mecklenburg Historical Society, 1948), 28, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, cmstory.org/sites/default/files/meckdec/shoutFreedom_Program01.pdf.
[70] Morrill, *Historic Charlotte: An Illustrated History of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County.*
[71] "Queen Charlotte's Face Cut," *Charlotte Observer*, July 21, 1966, sec. Local News.

offer his help in restoring the painting. Just a few short days following the incident, Gassman restored the painting to a practically perfect state.[72]

This event signified a new turning point in Charlotte's memory of the queen. Though many white elites attempted to portray the queen as white, the publicly displayed Allan Ramsay portrait no longer allowed it. In a time when "black versus white" was very much a part of Charlotte culture, it became common for visitors at the museum to question her race and wonder what that meant for white and black communities. As a result, the queen's image at this time became a very sensitive subject.

[72] "Portrait of Queen Restored," *Charlotte Observer*, July 29, 1966, sec. B.

The Queen as a Commonality

Not all middle-class and elite whites shared this view of the queen's race, however. Many white Charlotteans involved in the arts focused less on her race and became more interested in Queen Charlotte as a person and her legacy within the city. In 1922, the civic branch of the local women's club wrote a play entitled *Queen Charlotte's Horoscope* that depicted the city of Charlotte's past, present, and its future in electrical energy through the lives of Queen Charlotte and her court. Many locals praised the play, saying it was well constructed and boasted great pride in Charlotte's future.[73] In 1936, when the Mint Museum of Art opened its doors for the first time, a local, Mrs. S. Westray Battle, donated the famous portrait of Queen Charlotte painted by Allan Ramsay to the museum. Mrs. Mary Dwelle, persuaded Battle to make the portrait a gift knowing how important Queen Charlotte was not only to the museum, but to the city as a whole. Dwelle stated that the people of Charlotte had come to revere the Queen as though she were a personal ancestor. In the 1950s, Mary Dwelle donated a portrait of Queen Charlotte by John Singleton Copley, an early American artist and contemporary of Benjamin West, to the Mint Museum.[74] The painting was an addition to Dwelle's large collection of Queen Charlotte art, in various media, that she contributed over the years. For this occurrence, the *Charlotte Observer* described Queen Charlotte as plain, but youthful, and the artist painted the queen with her vitality and intelligence which "remained with the queen throughout her long and active life."[75] By the early 1960s,

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[73] "Drama Depicts City Progress," *The Charlotte Observer*, June 3rd, 1922.
[74] According to the article, Copley painted the Queen at the age of 17, the year of her coronation. The museum put the image on display in gallery no. 1 where old English silver from the Strause collection is on display.
[75] Marion Wright, "Painting Is Received of Queen Charlotte," November 13, 1958.

multiple articles appeared throughout Charlotte newspapers with published biographies of the queen and her role in North Carolina's history.[76] The articles reflected a tone of excitement and interest in the life of the queen. In addition, postcards and other tourist memorabilia sold around the city featured various paintings of the queen.

The framework of collective memory can interpret this impression of Queen Charlotte. According to Motley, Henderson, and Baker, collective memory is a "rubric used to describe how social group members know the past."[77] Group members and their present interpretation of events, persons, and objects from the past socially construct collective memory. Present interests, needs, beliefs, and ideals shape views of the past, thus suggesting that the different groups selectively retain, interpret, and forget information. Local artists, botanists, and writers informed Queen Charlotte's memory during this era. White elites no longer controlled the queen's image. Now, middle-class artists and preservationists took the lead.

By 1968, Queen Charlotte's popularity continued to reach new heights at the Mint Museum. For Charlotte-Mecklenburg's Bi-Centennial Celebration, the museum created an art exhibit in the queen's honor known as "The Age of Queen Charlotte: 1744-1818." It was the wish of Dennis Myers, President of the Board of Trustees, that citizens would see tangible evidence of Charlotte's heritage and some guidelines for a "continuing increase of cultural values in [the] community." [78] This exhibit included thirty-eight paintings that reflected influential "Western World" events and people during the time of

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[76] There were approximately nine articles published about Queen Charlotte in the *Charlotte Observer* alone during the 1960s. Most articles were published between 1967-1968.
[77] Carol Motley, Geraldine Henderson, and Stacy Baker, "Exploring Collective Memories Associated with African-American Advertising Memorabilia: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," *Taylor and Francis, Ltd.*, The Journal of Advertising, 32, no. 1 (2003): 49.
[78] "The Age of Queen Charlotte." (The Mint Museum of Art, May 7, 1968).

George and Charlotte's reign. Though it highlighted the queen's influence in Charlotte, this exhibit and its paintings reflected an affluent, white aristocratic control of the past.

Shortly following the opening of the exhibit at the Mint Museum, local botanists signified the importance of the queen's name and identity to the city by breeding a new rose flower in honor of Queen Charlotte. It gave Charlotte a unique new symbol to remember the queen. Dr. Morey, one of the rose's developers, said it took ten years to cultivate. Dr. Morey described the rose as "a new garden rose with all the charm and virtues of the old-fashioned roses, but a rose that possesses all of the good features of our ultra-modern varieties, just like Queen Charlotte was to the colonies. This rose is luscious, fragrant, lustrous…and a thing of joy to the gardener and a beauty to behold." City and park officials were enthusiastic to grow the rose around the city in local parks and botanical gardens. Queen Charlotte was the face of the city's bicentennial celebration. [79]

Articles continued to be published about Queen Charlotte in relation to the multiple events honoring her as the city's queen. In September of 1968, Edward Cody, writer for the *Charlotte Observer*, argued that while Queen Charlotte may have been royalty, she had the same problems with her college-aged son as some "space-age" mothers had with theirs. [80] In a letter acquired by UNC-Charlotte, the queen mother scolded her son William for complaining while he was studying in Germany in 1784. The queen told him to stop feeling sorry for himself and to start counting his blessings. In the atmosphere of racial tension, Cody's article provided a commonality amongst locals by

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[79] Bloys Britt, "A Rose for Charlotte," *Charlotte Observer*, February 10, 1969, sec. 1B.
[80] Edward Cody, "Buckle Down, Queen Charlotte Told Student Son," September 17, 1968.

addressing Queen Charlotte in relation to the city's history and by making her character relatable to residents of Charlotte.

Interpretation of the Queen in Present Day Charlotte

Over time, the queen's legacy remained a positive symbol for a city where rigidity between classes and races was high. By the 1980s, Queen Charlotte's significance took another turn in marketing, causing another shift in her memory. As a result of the growing banking industry, the city established its mark in the global economy. With Charlotte increasing its business in the global marketplace, the International Cabinet of the city called for vast improvements to meet global demand and expected visitors. As a result, marketing played a large role in making the city the "international gateway to the Carolinas."[81] Part of the marketing plan included commemorating the queen's namesake beyond museums, the Meck Dec celebrations, souvenirs, and newspaper articles. City commissioners wanted her to be remembered consistently by residents and visitors and announced that two statues of Queen Charlotte would be erected within the city to reflect the city's heritage. One statue was to be designed by Graham Weathers and to be placed at East Fifth and College Streets.[82] The other was to be designed by Raymond Kaskey for the airport. Both men spent months researching Queen Charlotte and interviewing locals around the city in order to commemorate the queen in the light of the people. During their research, both were surprised with the different racial interpretations and images of Queen Charlotte.

In January of 1989, a member of the black community in Charlotte publicly spoke out in regards to the queen's race. Once complete, Weathers' statue of Queen Charlotte featured her strolling in her gardens at Kew Palace with her pet dogs (*Figure 9*).

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[81] William Graves and Heather Smith, *Charlotte, NC: The Global Evolution of a New South City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 41.
[82] Mary Kratt, *Charlotte: Spirit of the South* (John F. Blair: Charlotte, 1992), 255.

Following the reveal off College Street, the question of the queen's race resurfaced as a result of an exchange of letters to the *Charlotte Observer* between Motlalepula "Mama" Chabaku and Weathers in regards to Queen Charlotte's features in the statue. Chabaku was a well-known black activist from South Africa who came to North Carolina after speaking out against apartheid. She charged that Weathers replaced the Queen's African features with "European or Caucasian appearance." Weathers, a white family doctor and sculptor in the Gaston County town of Staley, said he was stung by the insinuations. Weathers claimed that what he saw in most of several hundred portraits was "no suggestion in skin color, width of nose, and thickness of lips that might suggest Negro descent."[83] This occurrence unveiled that many members of Charlotte's middle-class black community embraced the idea of Queen Charlotte as black. Given the opportunity for the black community to be represented in the city's history, Chabaku refused to back down.

Ed Martin, the author of the article, discussed the popularity of the queen's debated ethnicity throughout Charlotte's past. Martin argued that most artists portrayed the queen as Caucasian with blond hair, a tiny mouth, small, sharp nose, and light eyes. Martin referred to D.A. Tompkins' work along with other artifacts, such as cups and miniature portraits, which portrayed her in this way. Martin pointed out, however, that the Mint Museum's painting by Ramsay was of a heavy woman with a broad nose, full lips, and chestnut eyes. As stated previously, this was the painting that led historian J.A. Rogers to pronounce Queen Charlotte as black.

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[83] Ed Martin, "Some Say Queen Charlotte Can Claim African Ancestry," February 22, 1989, sec. 1B

To better understand Chabaku's argument, Martin interviewed two African-Americans in the community. The first interview was with assistant vice president of First Union National Bank of Charlotte, Mr. William Harrill. Harrill said Queen Charlotte's case "illustrates how white history blurs black roles." The other local was Kelly Alexander Jr., president of the state NAACP. Alexander argued that history books written in America and in the city of Charlotte blurred true history because of racial superiority. Alexander said, "I grew up in an age before I knew Hannibal was black. But if you go back and look at statues of his time, there was no question he was black." [84] Alexander's remark supports the theory Charlotte's elite whites controlled Queen Charlotte's identity and her historical memory. It also highlights the motivating force behind the desire for middle-class blacks to highlight a part of their history construed by white elites.

Following the unveiling of the statue, it was evident that Queen Charlotte's race dispute continued to be a hot topic in the Queen City. Though blacks and whites in the city were more socially and politically equal than in the past, the queen's race was a topic that continued to cause tension amongst the groups. Sculptor Weathers argued he did not know whether Queen Charlotte had black ancestors, but the bulk of her portraits and even a lock of her hair still preserved in England gave no indication of her true race, although Weathers stated it did not matter to him if she was black or not. Since the debate, his statue remained unchanged. Chabaku, however, continued to claim the queen's African descent. This started a movement in the middle-class black community to embrace Queen Charlotte as their own and for historians to continue researching the queen's lineage.

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[84] Ibid.

In 1989, shortly after the controversy over Weathers statue, Kaskey revealed his statue at the airport. His interpretation of the queen tied in two main concepts—the statue's location at the airport and her queen status. By 1990, with the support of a small group of anonymous donors known as "The Queen's Table," Kaskey completed the bronze statue of Queen Charlotte.[85] Placed atop a fountain near the airport's entrance, the statue portrayed Queen Charlotte blowing in the wind produced by an airplane and she held a crown to represent the "Queen City" of Charlotte, NC (*Figure 10*). [86] Though many Charlotte residents praised the statue's design, others thought the design was horrific. Some stated the statue was not a good representation of the Queen's character. Those interviewed stated she appeared "too ugly" and weak. Kaskey responded, "I used her as a mythological symbol. Leaning backward in the wind seemed appropriate for an airport and the column sets her as a stationary weather vane. The emblem of the fountain is a compass rose, suggesting Charlotte as a crossroads. The crown in her hand is counterbalanced with the backwards motion as a welcome sign to the pedestrian."[87] For those questioned about the statue, this occurrence demonstrated the pride they took in Queen Charlotte as the city's symbol. For the thousands of people passing through the airport daily, they wanted the queen seen as a powerful icon of the city. Her appearing "ugly" and "weak" was a false representation of that meaning.

Though the statues of Queen Charlotte caused heavy debates amongst locals, one new addition to the city that many residents agreed on that reflected the queen was the

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[85] "Sculptor Fondly Recalls Making Charlotte Art." *Charlotte Observer*. February 28, 2010, 1st edition, sec. Neighbors.
[86] Recently, Charlotte Douglas (CLT) relocated the Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg statue between the Airport's two daily parking decks to make room for construction of the new Hourly Parking Deck and Rental Car Facility.
[87] "Queen Charlotte," last modified 2014, charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Airport/Pages/QueenCharlotte.aspx.

new Bank of American Corporate Center in Uptown. Bank of America unveiled its design to the public on Tuesday, June 14, 1988. The design featured a crown at the top of the skyscraper to deem Charlotte as the "Queen City" (*Figure 12*). This was the focal point of the building, which made it stand out architecturally. Originally, the main architect, Cesar Pelli, did not set out to design a crown for the top of the building. He said the natural end of the building's sculpted lines presented itself to this design. As a result, Pelli called the crown "an appropriate gesture" that seemed to "develop by itself," thus giving a crown to the Queen City. [88] With no facial features to debate, this was the first neutral symbol that commemorated Queen Charlotte. According to Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, American society can demonstrate some ability to create a middle ground for otherwise conflicting memories.[89] Divisive pasts that evoke "disagreement and inspire censure" can have commemoration potential when they are able to shift the focus from causes to "commitments and sacrifices that would be considered heroic in the service of other ends."[90] In this case, because the crown could not physically represent race, it equalized the black and white communities under one symbol---the city's historic heroine, Queen Charlotte.

In 2010, the matter of Queen Charlotte's race resurfaced again within the city. In honor of the 250th anniversary of Queen Charlotte's coronation, the Mint Museum hosted an exhibit that reflected the 'modern' Queen Charlotte. The Mint Museum chose an artist from Detriot, Michigan, Ken Aptekar, to assist in this task. Aptekar is known for taking historical paintings and giving them a modern twist and interpretation. Not knowing

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[88] Richard Maschal, "Building Looks to Future, and Past," *Charlotte Observer*, June 15, 1988.
[89] Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, "Commemorating a Difficult Past: Yitzhak Rabin's Memorials," *American Sociological Review* 67, no. 1 (March 11, 2013): 30–52.
[90] Holyfield and Beacham, "Memory Brokers, Shameful Pasts, and Civil War Commemoration."

much about Queen Charlotte, other than her character in the movie, *The Madness of King George*, Aptekar researched her through multiple primary sources, portraits, and biographies. During his research, he discovered the controversies over the queen's race in and outside of Charlotte. Accordingly, he wanted to highlight this topic within the exhibit. The portrait of Queen Charlotte by Alan Ramsay became the painting of choice in order to successfully do this.

As part of his creative process, Aptekar visited Charlotte and held focus groups with community members to discuss their reactions to the subject of his work. Aptekar chose the groups carefully in order to reflect the diversity of Charlotte. Among the general public who participated in Aptekar's focus groups were staff members of the Mint Museum, art students, and North Carolina Congress representatives. Aptekar asked the groups to first complete a gallery walk that featured Queen Charlotte in the Mint Museum. Following the walk, Aptekar brought the groups back to an auditorium with the Alan Ramsay portrait on display. Here, he asked the groups discuss the queen's relation to the city and her race based on what they saw.[91]

Their responses inspired Aptekar's multiple modern interpretations of Queen Charlotte. Charlotteans were very passionate about sharing their interpretations of the queen, but those thoughts took the discussions in very different directions. Aptekar's first interpretation to be painted reflected a discussion on immigration. Aptekar found it fascinating that Charlotteans were very supportive of having a German princess (an immigrant to Americans) as their symbol, even though many of them spoke out against

[91] Bethany Gregory, Interview with Ken Aptekar, May 3, 2016.

current immigration policies in the United States. Though a heavily debated topic, Queen Charlotte appeared to be the exception to the rule (*Figure 12*).

His second interpretation reflected the race debate. Aptekar said the black people of the focus group heavily identified themselves with the queen as a black woman. On the contrary, the white people struggled to understand what that exactly meant to the black people of Charlotte. Aptekar said he was surprised at how many whites actually refused to believe she was black. He wanted to capture this frustration in order to invite all Charlotteans to truly think Queen Charlotte.[92] To do this, Aptekar painted two portraits of the queen with the words "Black, White, Other" and "Oh Yeah She Is" in order to illustrate this opposition (*Figures 13 and 14*).

Aptekar's modern paintings of Queen Charlotte were a turning point how people remembered her. Aptekar was not only the first artist, but the first person in Charlotte to capture and represent the queen's disputed race for both white and blacks harmoniously. In addition, this act provided the opportunity for white elites and middle-class whites and blacks to openly debate her race. A sensitive topic whites and blacks usually kept to themselves now surfaced on display in the Mint Museum for everyone to interpret.

In October 2014, the Queen's image in reference to race dwindled while her namesake resurfaced. Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, multiple people continued to be use the nickname "Queen City" in reference to the city of Charlotte. Football fans in Cincinnati, Ohio, however, challenged this title before a game between the Cincinnati Bengals and the Carolina Panthers. According to WLWT News, this debate stemmed from a tweet posted by city officials in Charlotte. Using the hash tag

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[92] Ibid.

"#QCBowl," Charlotte residents claimed "it was the real Queen City of America and that the Panthers will prove their dominance during the football game." Bengal fans begged to differ. In a poem written in 1854 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, he named Cincinnati the "Queen City of the West." The Mayor of Cincinnati, John Cranley, agreed with the poem and said, "Everyone knows our city is centered by Fountain Square and…the lady, the Queen herself."[93] For over a week leading up to the game, fans were tied up in "Twitter wars" over claiming the nickname "Queen City." Fans from Charlotte referenced articles, images, and hash tags about Queen Charlotte to support their argument.[94] Blacks, whites, and Hispanics of all classes in Charlotte teamed up to support the cause. Since the establishment of Charlotte Town, she became a symbol that unified a city's diverse population for a cause. In the end, the game was a tie, with a score of 37 to 37 in over-time. Articles published by local news stated both cities could equally claim "Queen City" as their title.

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[93] "Charlotte Claims 'Queen City' Nickname; Debate to Be Settled at Bengals-Panthers Game," *Local News* (Cincinnati, Ohio: WLWT5, October 8, 2014), wlwt.com/news/charlotte-claims-queen-city-nickname-debate-to-be-settled-at-bengalspanthers-game/29019934.
[94] "#qcbOWL," *Twitter*, October 2014, twitter.com/search?f=realtime&q=%23qcbOWL&src=typd.

CONCLUSION

Though Queen Charlotte is a historical figure frequently overshadowed by her husband, the city of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and its people have commemorated her significance to the area's history for centuries. She has truly become their symbol, yet this symbol served multiple meanings over time as a result of Charlotte's political and social changes. This can be seen in historical exhibits, portraits, memorials, published works, and other city celebrations. For most of Charlotte's history, white elites controlled the memory of Queen Charlotte. They made her a symbol that not only stood for city heritage, but for white elitism. This symbol, however, significantly shifted when arguments began amongst upper class whites and blacks that she could be of black descent.

During Charlotte's early years, locals celebrated their queen. Though her reputation as their queen was bittersweet during the era of the American Revolution, civic leaders and upper-class whites understood that the resentment associated with King George and the British monarchy was no fault of the queen. As the king's popularity faded, Queen Charlotte's remained. When the Meck Dec celebrations began, her popularity amplified. Though it appeared ironic that the people of Charlotte would celebrate a queen with such festivities, she fascinated them.

In addition, Queen Charlotte's image played a significant role in the lives of white elite and middle-class women, becoming a "Lady Liberty" symbol during the nineteenth

and twentieth centuries. During the unprecedented era of progressive ideas and unimagined strengths for women, admiration of the queen climbed. Though change was slow, Charlotte women became actively involved in reform and Queen Charlotte became a symbol of freedom and pride for them. They closely identified themselves with her: a woman of little power, one who made significant changes in the British monarchy with her love for the arts, politics, and nature. They, too, wanted this same influence within the city of Charlotte.

This symbol of freedom did not reflect all women, however. At the turn of the twentieth century, Charlotte's economic, social, and political life was dashed by the reality that most whites had not relinquished their belief in white superiority. Therefore, elite white members of the city shaped Queen Charlotte's image as they saw fit. As Brunold Springer and J.A. Rogers brought the queen's race debate to light, white elites were very quick to shut down the theory. They refused to recognize Queen Charlotte with any relation to the black community.

By the 1980s, Queen Charlotte's image changed again when upper and middle-class blacks publicly claimed her as black. As Charlotte's politics and society significantly changed because of Civil Rights movements and laws implementing political and social equality, many blacks no longer felt suppressed to keep Queen Charlotte in the image of white elites. They were proud to acknowledge Queen Charlotte's black Portuguese descent and celebrate it during times of race debates and commemorations of the queen. When upper and middle-class blacks did acknowledge her race and white elites tried to hide it, their actions shed light on the social and political divides within the city.

Though the queen's race remains in question, political leaders, business owners, and artists of the community are proud to celebrate the queen as a symbol of historical pride and ties to the British monarchy rather than contest her race. Multiple businesses around Charlotte adapt the crown as their symbol. Museums continue to create exhibits in her honor, especially the Mint Museum. New developments in the city often suggest using her name for branding. Charlotte bakeries name food after her and the king. Just as they did in the past, local newspapers continue to write multiple articles about Queen Charlotte and her relation to the city's history. Even for Charlotte's Groundhog Day celebration, the city commissioners named the hog "Queen Charlotte." Hundreds of sources point to the adoration these groups have for their queen.

The queen as a symbol for Charlotte also stood for unity for the city's diverse community in recent years. The city's history varied greatly according to race, politics, and class. Despite these influences on time, place, and circumstances, Queen Charlotte as a symbol equally connected locals at different points in time. White elites, however, broke this common representation for many years by shaping her memory as they saw fit. By the twenty-first century, the queen as a symbol of unity returned through the exhibits at the Mint Museum, businesses, and sports.

In regards to Frederick Douglass' effort to shape the nation's memory of the U.S. Civil War, David Blight observed that "historical memory, he had come to realize, was not merely an entity altered by the passage of time; it was the prize in a struggle between rival versions of the past, a question of will, or power, and persuasion."

[95] Actors, institutions, and discourses speak for and shape the meaning of the past

through the construction of histories and memories. The memory of Queen Charlotte and her legacy are central signifiers that define the meaning and impact of the white elites, women, and upper to middle-class blacks within the city of Charlotte, and thus the status of race and gender relations and politics since the beginning.

Relentless politicization by these groups during commemorations of Queen Charlotte constructed her memory. The task of American history, maintains Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., is to celebrate and instill national culture, a trend that has trickled down across America on the local levels. According to David Waldstreicher, commemorations are a set of practices that empower locals to fight over the legacy of their history. They are not inherently reactionary or progressive; their political meanings are multiple, even contradictory, and can be shown to have changed radically over time.[96]

Focusing on Queen Charlotte as a case study, the city of Charlotte's history of celebration demonstrated a common political culture consisting of a series of contests for power and domination, contests over Queen Charlotte's race identity, and her significance to the city between white elites, women, and upper and middle-class blacks. Over the 250 years since the beginning of her reign, these conflicts produced multiple images of Queen Charlotte as contestants tried to claim the Queen as their own. Though she seemed a person wisely and ironically chosen to wear the name of a frontier American village, born and lost to England during her reign, her image and memory continues to transform and highlight the ever-changing relationships between the diverse groups of Charlotteeans.

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[95] David Blight, "For Something beyond the Battlefield: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 4 (March 1989): 1159.
[96] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3.

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APPENDIX A: IMAGES/PORTRAITS

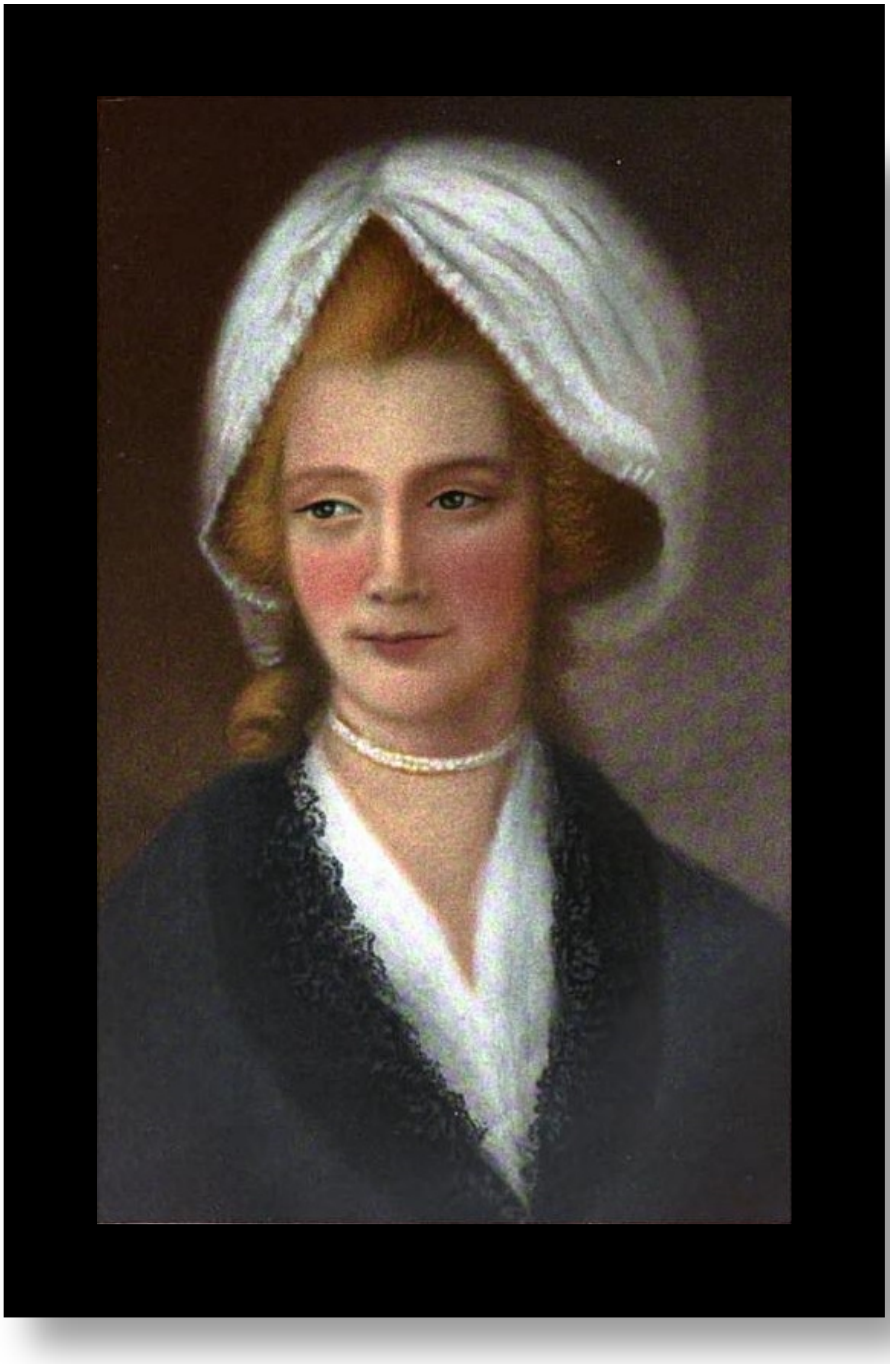

FIGURE 1: Queen Charlotte

From: *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte: From 1740 to 1903*. D.A. Tompkins, 1903.

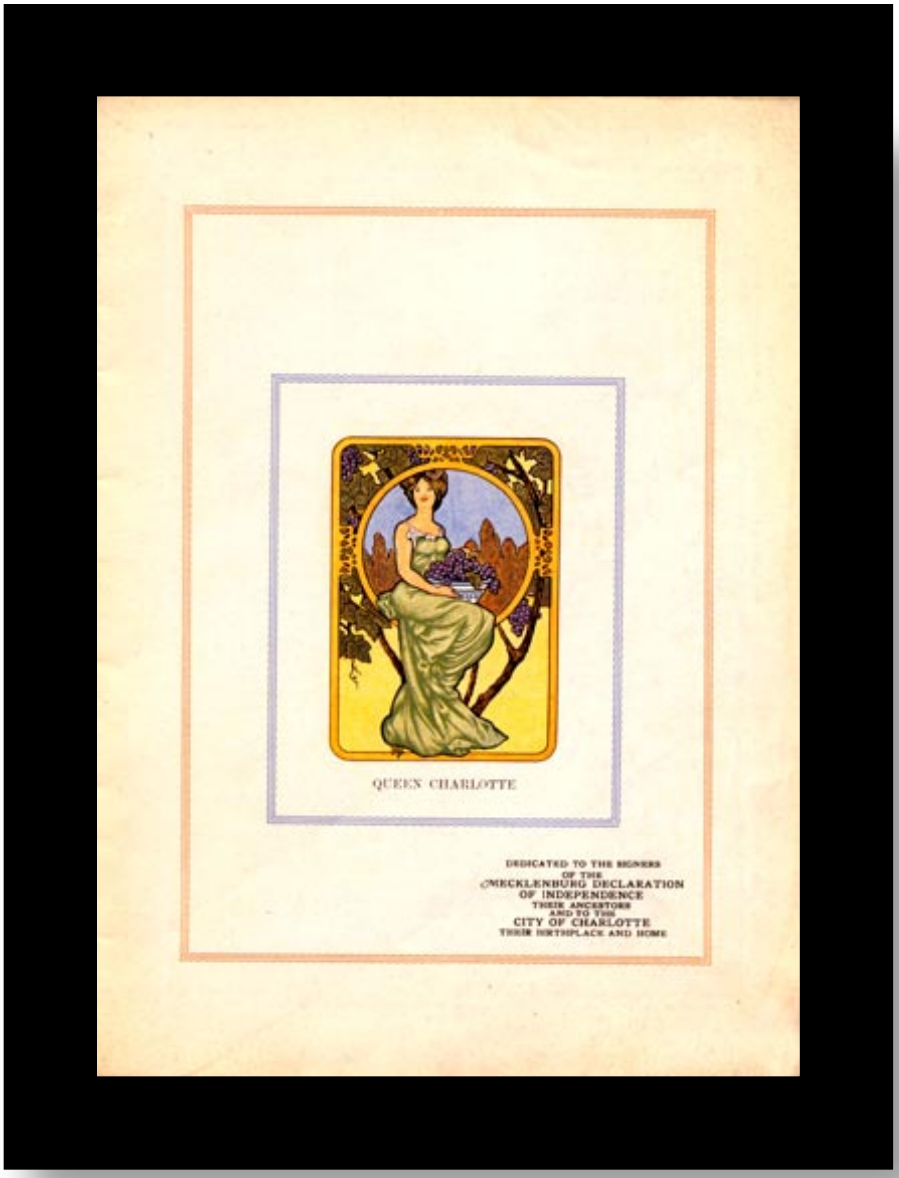

FIGURE 2: Queen Charlotte, 1916.

From: Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

FIGURE 3: The Royal Family, 1782-3.Thomas Gainsborough.

From: *Historic Mecklenburg and Old Charlotte: 1775-1925*. Thomas Wood Stevens, 1925.

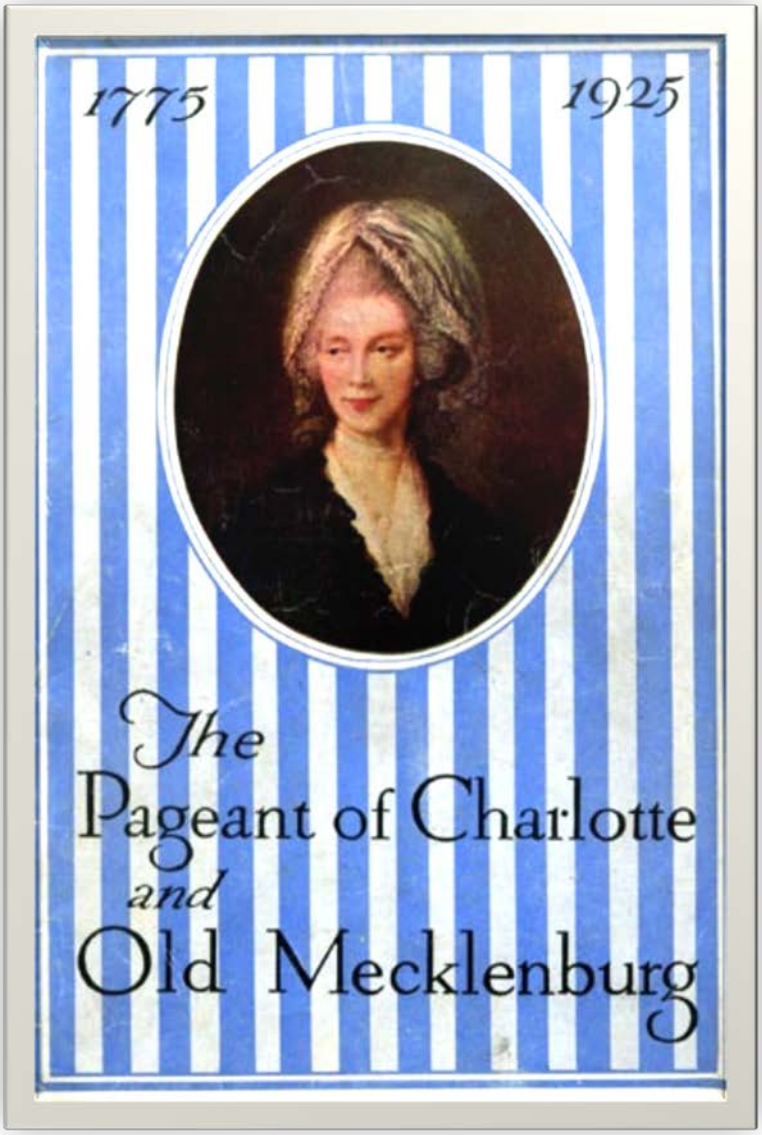

FIGURE 4: "The Pageant of Charlotte and Old Mecklenburg: 1775-1925." *The Queen City Printing Company*, 1925.

From: Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

FIGURE 5: Queen Charlotte in Robes, 1762. Allan Ramsay.

From: *A Royal Subject: Portraits of Queen Charlotte*. Michael Levey, 1977.

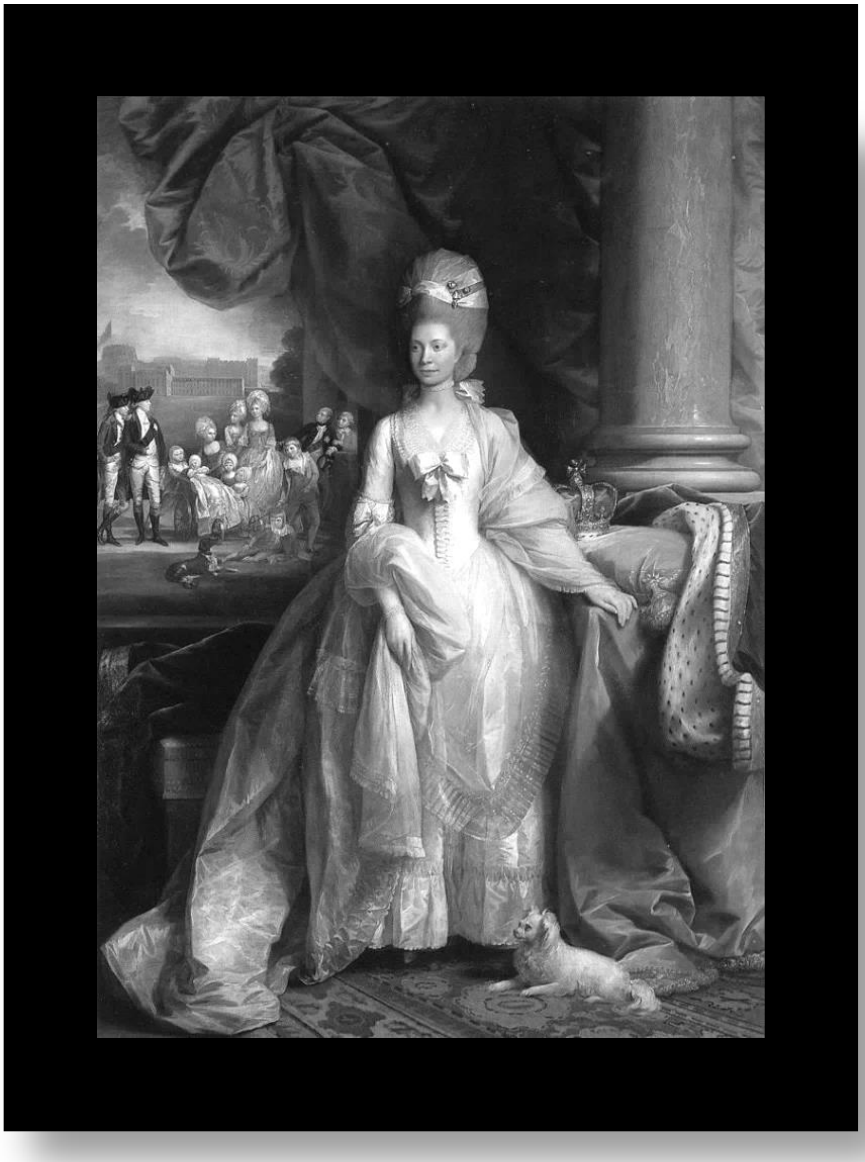

FIGURE 6: Queen Charlotte, 1779. Benjamin West.

From: *A Royal Subject: Portraits of Queen Charlotte*. Michael Levey, 1977.

FIGURE 7: Queen Charlotte, 1934. Eugene Thomason.

From: “Women’s Courage Praised,” *Charlotte Observer*. November 7, 1934. Lillian Crosland.

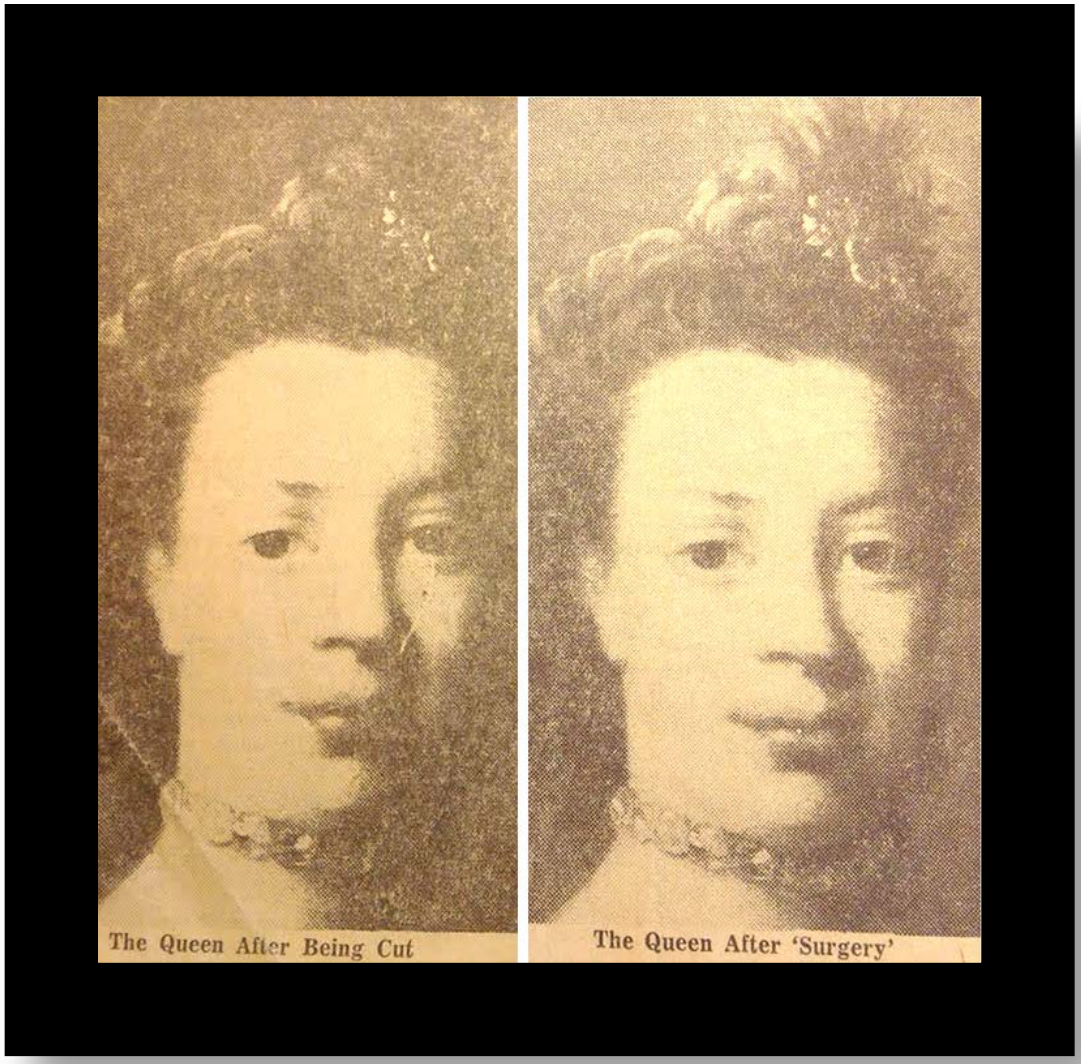

FIGURE 8: Queen Charlotte's Face Cut

From: "Queen Charlotte's Face Cut." *Charlotte Observer*. July 21, 1966, sec. Local News.

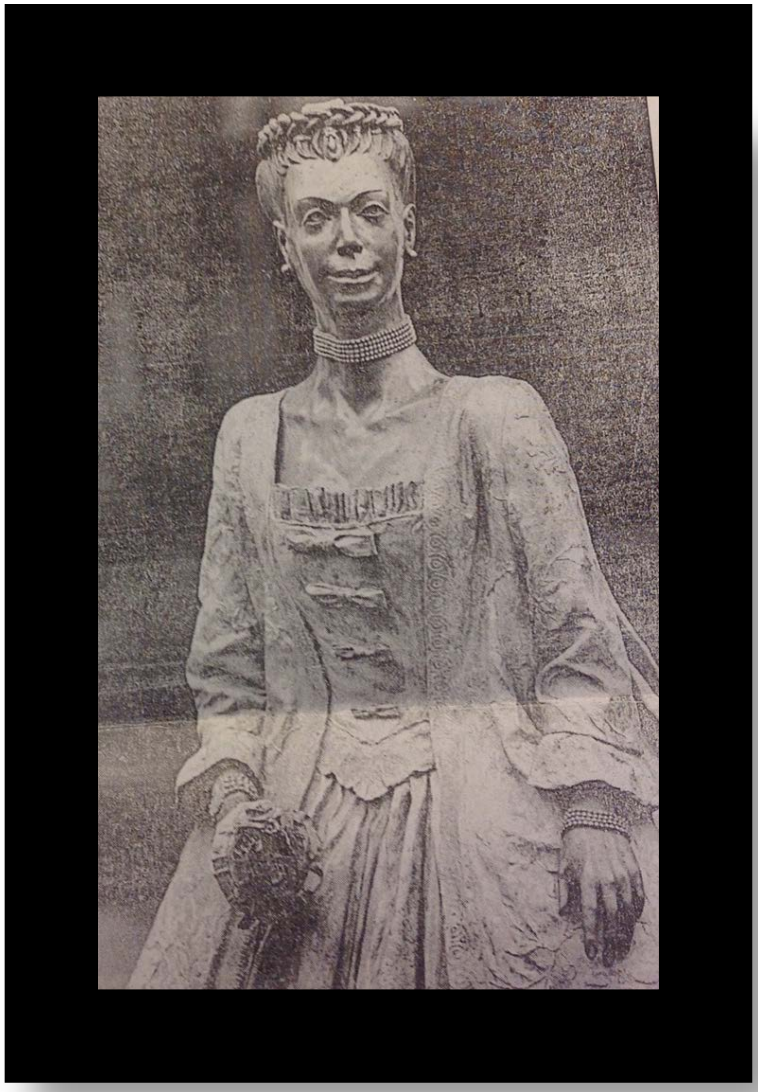

FIGURE 9: Queen Charlotte. Graham Weathers.

From: “Some Say Queen Charlotte Can Claim African Ancestry.” *The Charlotte Observer*. February 22, 1989, sec. Local News.

FIGURE 10: Queen Charlotte, 1990. Raymond Kaskey

From: cltairport.com/News/Pages/QueenCharlotte.aspx

FIGURE 11: Bank of America Building, 2011.

From: MPA Student Blogs, sogmpa.web.unc.edu/2011/05/17/5/, 2011.

FIGURE 12: Charlotte's Charlotte (IMMIGRANT), 2009. Ken Aptekar**.**

From: kenaptekar.net/2009-3/

FIGURE 13: Charlotte's Charlotte (BLACK WHITE OTHER), 2009. Ken Aptekar**.**

From: kenaptekar.net/2009-3/

FIGURE 14: Charlotte's Charlotte (OH YEAH SHE IS), 2009. Ken Aptekar**.**

From: kenaptekar.net/2009-3/