

**New Book To Explore:**

# First Ward: Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow

By Teresa Simmons  
Post Staff Writer

"First Ward was part of the original 360 acres radiating from Trade and Tryon that was designated as Charlotte in 1768...In 1870 Charlotte divided itself into four quadrants for political representation—First, Second Third and Fourth Wards."

These are excerpts from a paper entitled "First Ward: Yesterday-Today Tomorrow" prepared by Nancy Jones, Debbie Fullbright and Debbie Kooy.

Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fullbright have since carried the paper, and assignment for University of North Carolina, Charlotte class, further. Both have sought to work in conjunction with the First Ward elementary school and First Ward past and present residents in compiling a book.

"This book will be used in conjunction with First Wards School's 85th Anniversary Celebration to be held in April. The celebration is entitled "Sake's Alive: We're 85".

Nancy Jones and Debbie Fullbright are both married with children attending First Ward Elementary. Both are completing their degrees at the University North Carolina, Charlotte and became interested in writing a paper about the community for one simple reason their children attended the school.

The paper was prepared for a course entitled "Planning For Charlotte's Future" taught by Dr. David Goldfield.

They had no idea that they would actually embark upon such a rich heritage and a special part of Charlotte—virtually the heart.

"First Ward was the only historic neighborhood — early 1900's that was integrated," Mrs. Jones presented. "Whites and blacks of all economic and social levels lived within the radius of First Ward."

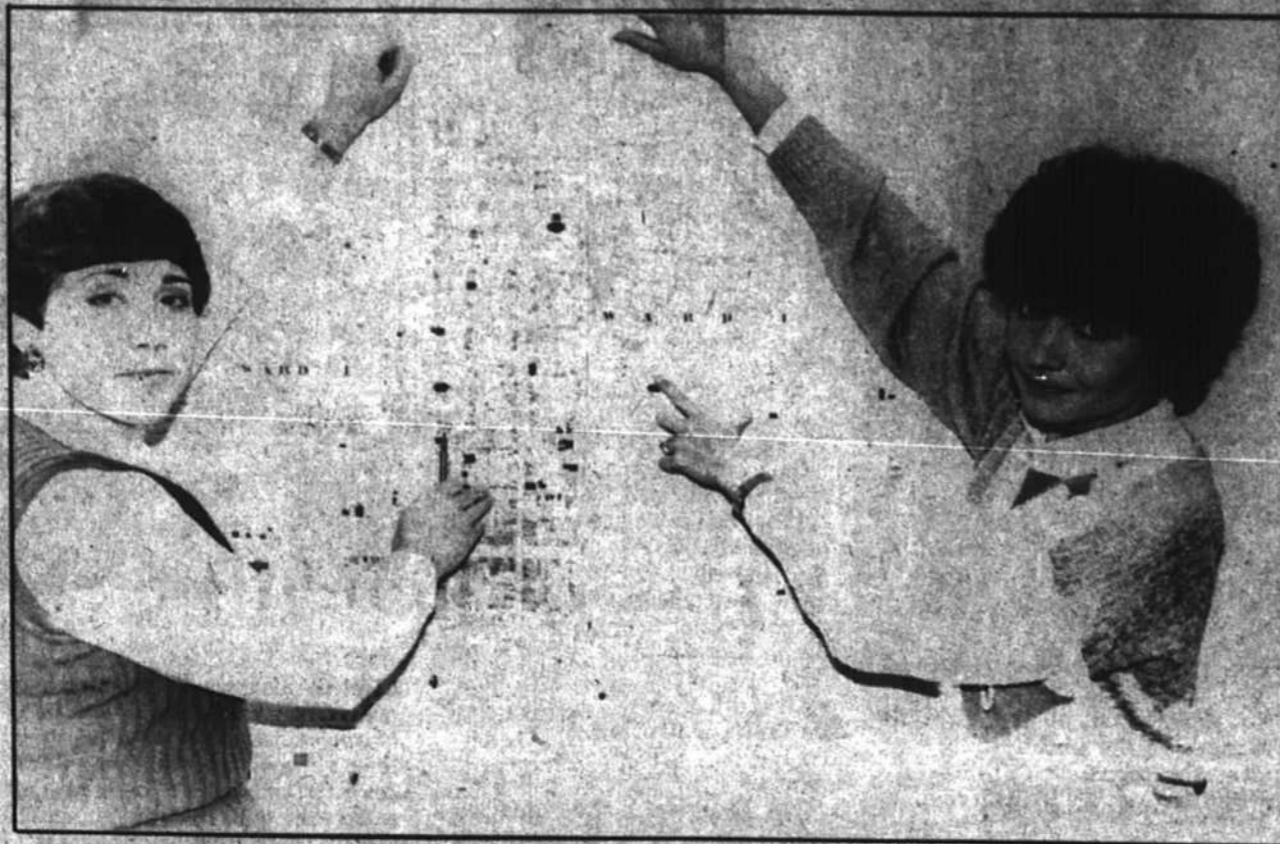
The early First Ward was bordered by Tryon and Trade Streets on the north and west, and eventually to McDowell street and the present-day Brookshire Expressway (southern and eastern boundaries respectively.)

The book is now in outline form. It will contain the rich history of the First Ward area. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fullbright have also solicited services of First Ward Elementary principal, teachers and 71 students to help gather information. This project will give the school, as well as the community and in-depth study of its origins and perhaps spark a sense of pride.

In addition to the historical comments from former and present residents, experiences of present-day students at First Ward Elementary will be included.

The following are paraphrased excerpts which will be included in the book. Please note, however, that the following gives only a glimpse of the in-depth work placed into finding out more about the heritage of Charlotte's First Ward.

The growth of First Ward and Charlotte from 1870 to 1930 was extraordinary. While the textile industry flourished the white working class built their homes alongside their black neighbors in First Ward. Prestigious churches were built — two remaining ones include First Presbyterian on the corner of Seventh and College and the Little Rock AME Zion on the corner of Seventh and Myers. These buildings



Debbie Fullbright and Nancy Jones, authors of the upcoming history book on Charlotte's First Ward, hold a 1877 map of Charlotte.

**First in series**

are fine examples of Victorian Gothic and Neo-Classical architecture. First Presbyterian was the church First Ward's residential black professionals, while Old Little Rock was designed by J.M. McMichael for the black working class. First Ward School has been in existence since the early 1900's. It is now the oldest elementary school in Charlotte.

In the 1920's instead of Earle Village there were elegant mansions along Tryon, impressive homes along College and McDowell and fine middle class housing in its interior. It was the city's favorite residential area. There was a cooperative atmosphere in the racially mixed economic sector.

The authors wrote "The period from 1930-1960 shows the downhill trend of First Ward that eventuated its virtual destruction with the urban renewal in the sixties. The Depression of the thirties had taken its toll among businesses, black and white alike. Jim Crow laws translated into a racial polarization in the integrated community."

Many residents began to leave for the north in search of better opportunities. Many sold or rented property. Whites, in the new automobile era relocated to cheaper real estate in the new suburban areas of the city. Parking lots became more prominent in First Ward.

By the 1940's First Ward appeared to be a mass of parking lots, run-down businesses, and rental housing that was inappropriately maintained by absentee landlords. Many regarded this area as a fast growing slum district.

"The real devastation occurred," the authors revealed, "as a result of Verran Sawyer's Redevelopment Commission in the sixties." The result was the bulldozing of the black residential core of First Ward and the erection in 1967 of Earle Village Homes, a 409 unit public housing project named after Earle Gluck. The area is racially

imbalanced with more than 90 percent of the area black. The area residents are densely clustered with roughly half of the land area left undeveloped. Great expanses of

open lots were simply left vacant as a result of the sixties renewal which erased the structures, the history and the community of First Ward."

The 1980 census revealed that the population in First Ward is 1,901

compared to the 1960 census of 6,090. Of the 678 residential units in all of First Ward, 642 are multi-family units. Of the 1,906 residents in First Ward, 1,316 are housed in Earle Village.

Next Week: We will take a look at more in-depth plans for the upcoming book concerning First Ward and explore Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Fullbright's interest in promoting neighborhood unity in First Ward.

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**Notice**

**Minority/Women Business Enterprises Suppliers, Professional Service Firms and Potential M/WBEs**

**Plan to Attend**

Quarterly Conference on City-County Purchases  
Saturday, February 16, 1985, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
McDonalds Cafeteria, I-85 and Beatties Ford Road

**Purchasing Department Proposed Purchases for February and March, 1985**

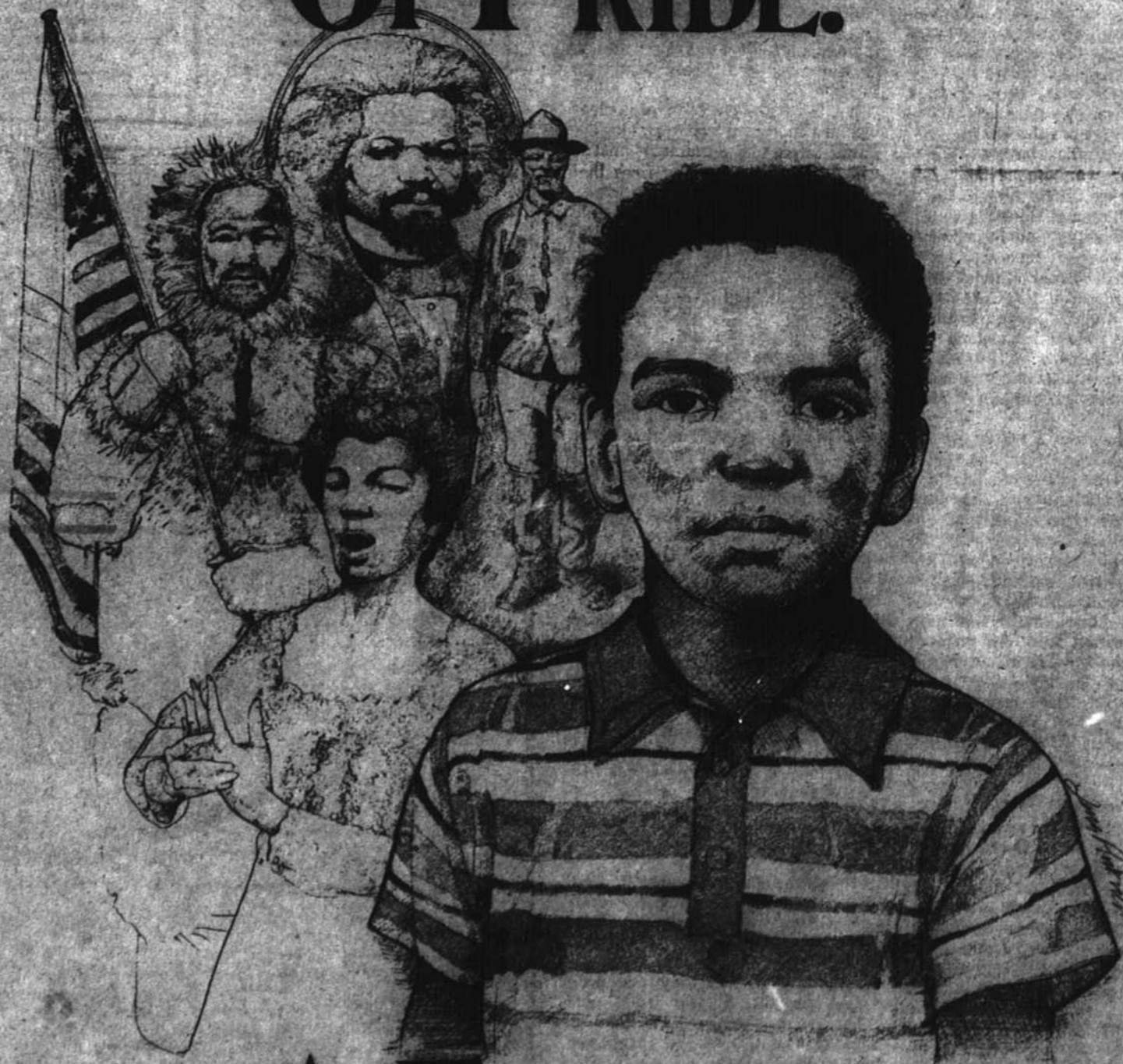
It is the intention of the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to advertise for proposed purchases during February and March. The City and County encourage all Business Enterprises including those owned and operated by minorities and women to consider participating in these projects.

- Cast Iron Soil Pipe and Fittings
- Clay Brick
- Reinforced Concrete Pipe
- One Fork Truck
- Various and sundry office and janitorial supplies and automotive parts.

Note: A listing of construction projects for the upcoming quarter will be available for M/WBEs in Construction.

For further information call:  
Purchasing Department-Bill Mouchet-336-2256  
M/WBE Coordinator, Community Relations Committee-George Wallace-336-2424  
M/WBE Program Director-Elizabeth Mills-336-2256

# A HISTORY OF PRIDE.



# A FUTURE OF PROMISE.

Black History Month is a time to reflect. A time to look back with pride at the countless achievements made by Black Americans, and a time to look forward with hope for the future.



Mardriana Mack, 6, of Cliffwood Rd., decided that, although the weather might be bad enough for schools to close, it wasn't so bad she couldn't play outside. Standing on the front porch of Janice Allen's house on W. Park Ave., Mardriana showed off her whistle-blowing ability.