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TOM HANCHETT

Charlotte History 101: Queen, King, Duke, Crown



Jeff Atkinson introduced Dr. Tom Hanchett, also known as “Charlotte’s Dr. History” and best known for his 16 years as Staff Historian at Levine Museum of the New South in Uptown Charlotte where he retired in 2016. Tom is not a Charlotte native, but arrived here back in 1981, working with Dan Morrill at UNCC.

He has written books, writes a food column for the Charlotte Observer, gives tours of the city, speaks to numerous civic groups, and is a part-time fiddle player. In 2015 he was named Charlottean of the year.

Having studied at Cornell University, University of Chicago and UNC-Chapel Hill, he holds degrees in both History (Ph.D.) and Urban Studies.

Dr. Hanchett gave us an informative and entertaining history of Charlotte, hitting the high points listed in the title above. Charlotte history dates back to 1768, and was named for Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III of England, who was from Mecklenburg, Germany. The names of the city and County were approved by Colonial Governor William Tryon.

Some of Charlotte’s residents came up from the coast, but the majority were German and Scots-Irish that came down from the North. The Scots-Irish built a Church down in what is now the SouthPark area, Sharon Presbyterian, which was named for the Plains of Sharon, a district of the holy land near Mount Carmel, and referred to positively in the Book of Isaiah as a place where flocks and crops would flourish. The road from town out to the church was named Sharon, and the road from Sharon Presbyterian to Amity Presbyterian was called Sharon-Amity, not coincidentally close to Carmel Road. There are now some two dozen place names in Charlotte that include “Sharon.”

After the Revolutionary War, in 1799, a boy named Conrad Reed found a 17-pound gold nugget, which his family mistakenly believed to be fool’s gold, since there had never been any gold found in the country. The shiny rock was used as a doorstop for three years, at which time it was sold to a visiting jeweler for the princely sum of \$3.50. This discovery set off the first gold rush in US History,

and within a year there were some 600 mines and 'prospects' in the area. Gold production continued here until 1849, when richer prospects were discovered in California. Thus, we have Mint Street and the Mint Museum, named because of the US Mint that was established in Charlotte in 1837.

King Cotton arrived in Charlotte after the Civil War. The railroads passing through Charlotte, combined with the end of large cotton plantations resulting from emancipation, precipitated the growth of the cash crop of cotton on the smaller farms here in the Piedmont that could profitably be farmed with free men. Not only was Charlotte a center for trading and shipping cotton, but it quickly became a place where cotton was manufactured into textiles. Atherton Mill was one of the first ones established here (in 1890), and the original building still stands in South End.

By the 1920's Charlotte had become a big deal, and our area produced more cotton textiles than New England. Families moved from the farms to the cities to find work and found it in the mills. Women and children were employed in the mills in large numbers, and labor here was cheaper than in the north, which fueled the growth of manufacturing in this region.

James B. Duke and his family acquired enormous wealth by inventing and marketing mass-produced cigarettes. In 1899, Dr. Gill Wylie and his brother conceived a plan to construct a hydroelectric facility near Rock Hill, SC. Gill went to see Mr. Duke at his home in New Jersey, and got his financial backing for the project. Thus, began The Duke Power Company and the electrification of the Carolinas. By the 1920s, this region had more and cheaper energy than anywhere else in the country.

Given the abundant energy, the textile manufacturing, and the fact that Charlotte was a transportation hub, growth of the city took off during the early 20th century. Tall buildings sprang up on Tryon Street, the 'Wall Street of the South' and the suburbs expanded as well. In 1911, John Nolen designed Myers Park, African-Americans freed from slavery gave rise to institutions such as Johnson C Smith University, and also black newspapers, insurance companies, doctors and lawyers.

It was also the time when NASCAR came into being, with the first sanctioned stock car races taking place in the forties.

All of this economic energy led to the creation of the Crown, which Tom uses to describe the skyscrapers and vibrant downtown that has sprung up over the last 60 years or so. In addition to the economy, there was the fact that Charlotte handled desegregation "more gracefully" than most southern cities; the growth of our education system, with UNCC and CPCC; the doubling of the population of Mecklenburg County between 1990 and 2015, from half a million to a million people; the influx of Fortune 500 companies from 2 in 1980 to 8 in 2010; and the late arrival of immigrants from around the world, leading him to describe Charlotte as an "immigrant gateway."

We have gone from Queen, to King, to Duke to Crown, and while Tom doesn't know how we will change going forward, he is pretty sure that change is in our future.

Written By: Rick Handford

CLUB NEWS

STAYING IN TOUCH with our Rotary members is important. Please take a minute to check on your friends, report funny stories and updates back to me to share with everyone so we can see who is doing what.

CLASSROOM CENTRAL: On October 6, Rotarians worked large group orders in the warehouse and picked and packed about 50 orders that will be distributed to teachers later this month. The next opportunity for volunteers will be Wednesday, November 4. Thanks to the team: [David Anderson](#), [Katie Tyler](#), [Don Millen](#), [Joy Poe](#), [Catherine Bracey](#) and [Bill Bradley](#)



RALSTON POUND passed away Monday, October 5, 2020. Where does one begin to write about Ralston? His father, Ralston M. (Gus) Pound, Sr. was a Charter Member of the Rotary Club of Charlotte. He began attending Rotary with his father in his early twenty's and joined the club February 3, 1948. He has served as secretary-treasurer, director, and chairman of many committees and service avenues. He is a Paul Harris Fellow, was the Distinguished Rotarian in 2005-2006, did his How I Got Where I'm At for the second time in 2015. He was an F6F Hellcat fighter pilot in WWII. He was a member of the Fighters Aces Association (AFAA) that was formed in 1960 in San Francisco by then Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas White and was presented the Congressional Gold Medal. A Fighter Ace is a pilot of the Army, Navy, Air Force & Marines who shot down 5 or more enemy planes during WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Ralston was credited with 6. He was inducted into the NC Military Veterans Hall of Fame April 27, 2019.

He had 72 years perfect attendance this past February. He would have turned 100 years old on December 31, 2020. He and Deanie married in 1946 and they had two children – Trip who lives in Fresno, CA. and Lynn who lives in

Greensboro. The family has not made any plans for a service at this point and are thinking of a small graveside service at Evergreen, maybe in November.



Christine Cipriano has come on board as the club's Executive Secretary and is working with Sandy to transition the position during the month of October. Christine worked with Southern Shows for 21 years managing the Southern Christmas Show. She was highly recommended for this position by two past presidents – [David Zimmerman](#) and [Marilynn Bowler](#). Once you meet Christine, you will see it was a good thing to follow up on their recommendation. Most recently, she was executive assistant for the C-level managers at Badger Sport. Christine has a BS in Business Administration from UNC Charlotte, Belk College School of Business. She and her husband, Bill live in Denver, NC with two sons – Ben and Matthew. Welcome!

Thanks to the search committee for their thorough job...

[Cheryl Banks](#), [Bill Bradley](#), [Colleen Brannan](#), [Jerry Coughter](#), [Carol Hardison](#), and [Katie Tyler](#). [John Lassiter](#) and [Rich Campbell](#) served as consultants.

ROTARY GOLF BID: The results are in and the following bidders are happy with their cool stuff.

AutoBell Certificate (thank you, [Chuck Howard](#)) - \$550 bid by [Dena Diorio](#)

Pine Island Country Club foursome - \$275 bid by [Phil Volponi](#)

Courtyard Marriott Charles (thank you, Bill Moore & Fairfield Inn & Suites) - \$200 bid by [Mike Wollinger](#)

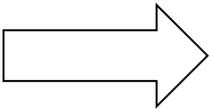
Belk Gift Card (thank you, [Luther Moore](#)) - \$210 bid by [Lori Giang](#)

Donald Haack Diamonds necklace (thank you, [Julie Haack](#)) - \$350 bid by [Nancy McNelis](#)



Guest speaker: Pet Sumner, a fellow Rotarian and Marketing Expert.

Topic: **The Value of Video!** Carry Out Your Brand's Mission & Vision Across Every Platform.



VIRTUAL ROTARY MEANS BUSINESS Tuesday, October 13th 5:00-6:30

REGISTER: MeetUp Group: <https://www.meetup.com/RMB7680/>

REGISTER: Event <https://www.meetup.com/RMB7680/events/273346468/>

MEMBERSHIP

07/01/2020 259 *New Members:*
 10/06/2020 247
 Net Increase -12 *Resignations:* Terri Guthrie, Greg Forest, Ralston Pound

83 participated on the zoom call

CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS (10/14/2020 – 10/20/2020)

Coggins, Boyd W. Jr. (BOYD)	14 October
Hinrichs, Stephanie Scholler (STEPHANIE)	14 October
Cantrell, Henry B. (HENRY)	18 October
Lankes, Kasey L. (KASEY)	18 October
Mallicote, Jessica M. (JESSICA)	18 October

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES (10/14/2020 – 10/20/20)

Ramon, Diego (DIEGO)	Denise (DENISE)	10/15
Chambliss, Joel Bryce (BRYCE)	Jarrett Valette	10/17
Hadley, William W. (WILL)	Cheryl	10/19
Turner, Mark A. (MARK)	Diana	10/19
Kemper, Christopher B. (CHRIS)	Shelley	10/20

ROTARY ANNIVERSARIES (10/14/2020 – 10/20/2020)

Gass, Joseph A. Jr.(JOE)	10/15/19	1 (in this club)
Otte, Jason Leigh (JASON)	10/15/19	1
Wadsworth, Edwin H. (ED)	10/15/02	18
Driggs, Edmund H. (ED)	10/18/05	15
Reynolds, Rex (REX)	10/20/15	5
Penner, Josef H. (JOE)	10/20/98	22

UPCOMING PROGRAMS (utilizing Zoom)

10/13 – Alexys Taylor, Charlotte Programs – Unity Project

10/20 – Christopher S. Lawing, Charlotte Signs Project

10/27 – Live from the Double Door Inn documentarians

11/03 – Dr. Michael Blitzler, Nationally recognized political expert