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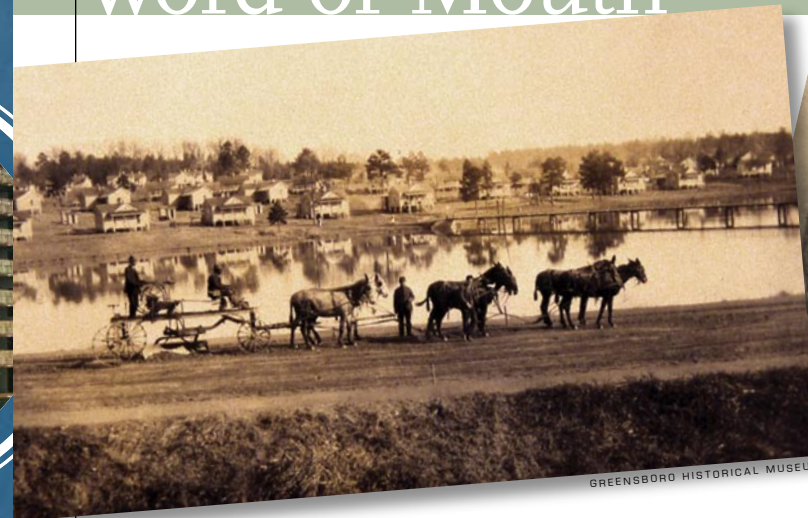
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PROFILE > Greensboro

Word of Mouth



GATE CITY TURNS 200

When the founding fathers established a town in the heart of Guilford County in 1808, they had no idea how central the location was. Greensboro soon grew into a hub of commercial and social activity in the Southeast.

City leaders are celebrating Greensboro's bicentennial this year from March 25 (the date of the sale of the land on which the city was founded) through May 17 (when the sale became official). A torch relay, parade of decades, and neighborhood parties are among the planned events — visit greensboro200.com to learn more.

Jim Schlosser, a former reporter with the *Greensboro News & Record* who is working on a history of the city, cites a few historical highlights:

1850s The first railroad tracks are installed near South Elm Street at the behest of former governor John Motley Morehead. “After those first tracks went in, the rails multiplied and we became a hub,” Schlosser says.

1890s The Cone brothers arrive and soon earn the city a national reputation for textile production. “Greensboro was a good place for them to do business. We were near the cotton fields and had good rail connections. The Cones went on to build three mills here, beginning with



Proximity in 1896 and Revolution in 1900. They built the White Oak mill in 1902.”

1920s Greensboro's real estate is considered “the wonder of the state.” Many of the city's distinctive buildings are built in this period, Schlosser notes.

“The '20s was just an outstanding decade for architecture. In 1927, we had the Carolina Theatre opening. In 1929, Grimsley High School opened its campus at a cost of \$1 million. Back then, civic leaders built public buildings to make a statement.”

1948 The first pair of Wrangler jeans is produced by Blue Bell, Inc., which later became Wrangler, now VF, one of Greensboro's most enduring and active corporate citizens. “CEO E.A. Morris wanted

Workers village, White Oak mill, left; Glenwood streetcar, above; below, women's weaving room at White Oak circa 1903

Blue Bell to have its own product line. So he hired a tailor and sent him out West to interview real cowboys about what they thought would be the perfect pair of jeans.”

1950s Greensboro secures two major interstate highways, I-85 and I-40, and the regional airport, ensuring its future as a transportation hub as train travel declined.

“Because of our network of railroads, Greensboro got all major highways in the state when the highway system was started,” says Schlosser. “The highways were designed to follow the railroad tracks. And the federal government designating Greensboro's airport as the regional airport has proved to be a godsend. We've diversified, but we're still a transportation hub.”

1960 Four black North Carolina A&T State University students launch the Greensboro sit-ins at the Woolworth's cafeteria. In just two months the sit-in movement spread to 54 cities in nine states.

“It went on here for six months and got a lot of people thinking. Then in 1963, Jesse Jackson, the student body president at North Carolina A&T, integrated all the cafeterias and theaters. Everything integrated by the mid 1960s.” —Chris Gigley

Word of Mouth



Yvonne Johnson plans to build partnerships to strengthen her city.

MARK WAGONER PHOTO

MADAME MAYOR

A native daughter takes office

Yvonne Johnson made history this past December when Greensboro swore her in as the city's first African-American mayor.

A Greensboro native, Johnson is no stranger to city politics. Her service to the community, in addition to leadership positions with numerous boards and commissions, includes 14 years as a city council member, six of those years as mayor pro-tem.

Johnson's interest in issues of social justice and politics took root when she entered Bennett College, the local women's college, in the fall of 1960. With the sit-in the previous February of four black North Carolina A&T State

University students at the whites-only Woolworth counter downtown, Greensboro had become a hotbed of civil rights activities. Johnson joined fellow Bennett students in successive marches and protests.

She left Greensboro for a few years after college, living in Washington, DC, and New York State, but returned in 1968 as a wife and new mother. She earned a master's degree in guidance and counseling from North Carolina A&T and worked with the YMCA and other community programs while raising four kids.

In her day job (the mayor's post is part time), Johnson directs One Step Further, a mediation and sentencing agency that works with nonviolent felons to divert them from prison and redirect young first-time offenders.

Her work experience will guide some of her mayoral decisions, she says. Facing the aftermath of a shake-up in the police department, among other issues, Johnson plans to hold a series of town meetings so that citizens can voice their questions and concerns.

"One of the things I've learned from mediation is that angry, frustrated people want to be heard," she says.

In addition to public safety issues, Johnson's priorities for the city include increasing environmental initiatives and building on recent economic momentum.

"We have a lot of great things here, like our volunteerism and our record of generous giving. But [surveys have shown] people don't trust each other. We have 87 different ethnic groups in this city. Those folks need to feel like they're a real part of the city."

Which may make Johnson the perfect fit. The daily newspaper dubbed the grandmother of seven "hugger in chief" for her tendency to embrace friends and strangers alike.

"I'm a nonviolent person," she says. "And I intend to keep building friendships, partnerships, and good relationships throughout the city." — *Lisa Watts*

TEACUP: MARK WAGONER PHOTO

TABLETOP TREASURES

Inside a massive building along I-40 east of Greensboro sits the world's largest selection of dinnerware — old and new china patterns, stemware, stainless flatware, and collectibles — for consumers who want to fill in their broken or missing table settings or recreate their grandmother's china set.

Bob Page began Replacements, Ltd. in 1981 when he left his day job as a state auditor to pursue his passion, scavenging flea markets and antique stores. His storehouse of more than 280,000 patterns grows monthly.

"We have almost 12 million pieces of inventory," says Page. "Our building covers an area of five to six football fields, and we ship all over the world."

Replacements gets its goods from a network of trusted antique dealers,

manufacturers, buyers, and everyday people looking to sell their patterns. Each piece is inspected and graded, taking into account its age.

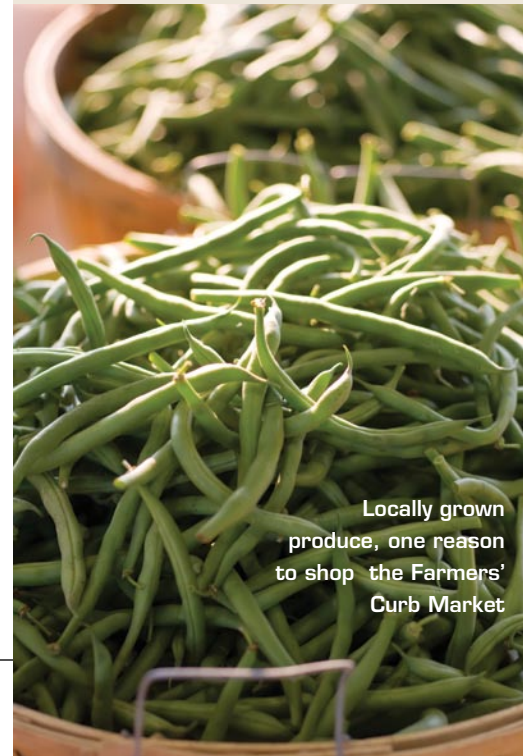
Some 10 percent of the customer base — that's 80,220 in 2007 — visit the showroom. There they find china and crystal displayed in furniture Page has acquired on his travels — like the 1880s Eastlake walnut cabinet that once stood in a jewelry store in Jackson, Mississippi.



Mostly customers rely on the Replacements Web site, which gets two million unique visitors a month. Some seek pieces not in stock. "They give us the details of what they're looking for, and they'll get an automated e-mail when we've found it," says Page.

— *Chris Gigley*

FIELD-FRESH AND FRIENDLY



Locally grown produce, one reason to shop the Farmers' Curb Market

Saturday mornings at the Farmers' Curb Market downtown are part grocery shopping, part social gathering, and part education. Under one roof, visitors find everything from Greek pastries and free-range chicken to Middle Eastern breads and seafood fresh from the coast, usually sold by regulars who've known each other for decades and who don't mind when a newcomer needs help distinguishing between root vegetables or different flavors of goat-cheese spreads. Neighbors coo over new babies; bakers tempt passers-by with samples.

Housed in the old National Guard Armory, the market brings local farmers — most of them organic growers — face to face with enthusiastic custom-



BERT VANDERVEEN PHOTOS

ers. The city's diverse ethnic groups are well represented among the vendors and shoppers. Artists also peddle wares, including jewelry, photography, soaps and lotions, wood crafts, and small sculpture. Fresh-cut flowers are a draw from spring through fall. — *LW*

Greensboro Farmers' Curb Market, 501 Yanceyville St. Open Saturdays, 6 a.m. to noon, year round; Wednesdays, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., May through December. greensboro-nc.gov/departments/parks/facilities/market/

Word of Mouth

Bill Mangum with artwork from his book, *Greensboro: Roots and Renaissance*

PAINTING HIS HOME

As a watercolor painter who has made a good living from his art, Bill Mangum is a grateful man. He frequently gives back to the city that has supported him, serving weekly breakfasts at a downtown soup kitchen and designing an annual holiday card to benefit the homeless.

When organizers started talking about celebrating the city's bicentennial, Mangum looked back at his work and realized that, a) it was hard to pick

one image that captures the city's essence and b) Greensboro has reinvented itself so much in the last ten years that many of his local pieces felt dated.

So Mangum set to work this past year capturing historical settings, neighborhoods, parks, and local commerce. He compiled 103 of his paintings, full of his characteristic lively color and detail, into the book *Greensboro: Roots and Renaissance*, with personal commentary on each page. Mangum

celebrates, for example, his fellow Greensboro business owners who started small, many of them now with an international reach like his own studio, William Mangum Fine Art.

"I love sharing my hometown with strangers," Mangum writes in his introduction. "It is a place where people of vision have an opportunity to live out their dreams." — LW

To learn more, visit greensborobook.com or williammangum.com

FRIENDS AND EDUCATORS

Quakers — members of The Religious Society of Friends, a Christian denomination — arrived in Greensboro in the 1750s from eastern North Carolina and Pennsylvania. The pacifists set themselves apart with more than their silent meetings. Quakers, for instance, treat women as equals. When slavery took hold in the South at the start of the nineteenth century, the Quakers were one of the first groups to renounce it.

The Quakers' enlightenment was born out of their thirst for education.

"Early on, the Quakers had a real focus on the importance of literacy

among their members," says Gwen Gosney Erickson, Friends Historical Collection librarian and archivist at Guilford College, which began life in 1837 as New Garden Boarding School and became a college in 1888.

When the state chose Greensboro for a women's college (now University of North Carolina-Greensboro) in 1891, there was a strong Quaker presence.

"Many of its early faculty members were Quaker women who received their initial education at the New Garden Boarding School," says Erickson. "They had the skills to start as professors in the 1890s."



COURTESY OF THE FRIENDS HISTORICAL COLLECTION, GUILFORD COLLEGE, GREENSBORO, N.C.

The city's numerous Friends congregations provide one of the largest concentrations of Quakers in the country. — CG

Quakers formed Guilford College's first faculty, 1888



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Photo courtesy of Greensboro Then & Now