At Levine Museum of the New South, we look at how Charlotte and the surrounding area has changed since the end of the American Civil War in 1865. These changes range from the types of jobs people have held to the constitutional rights we hold dear today. When we think about the New South, we like to define it as:

- **A Time** — The New South is the period of time from 1865, following the Civil War, to the present.
- **A Place** — The New South includes areas of the Southeast U.S. that began to grow and flourish after 1865.
- **An Idea** — The New South represents new ways of thinking about economic, political and cultural life in the South.

In Unit 4, *We Shall Overcome*, we learned how the Civil Rights activists changed the course of Charlotte and the United States. In Unit 5, *Whirlwind of Growth*, we’ll learn about Charlotte’s huge growth from a small farming community and regional textile town into an international banking city.

**Glossary:**

- **Banking Center** - a city with a large number of financial businesses that offer a wide variety of services.
- **Feminist** - a person who advocates for women’s rights and the equality of the men and women.
- **Culture** - the customs, arts, organizations, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.
- **Newcomer/Transplant** - a person who has recently arrived to a place.
- **Diversity** - a mixture of people from different identities, backgrounds, and experiences.

**Section 1: Banking Boomtown**

In the 1980s, Charlotte area banks NCNB and First Union transformed federal banking laws when they became the first banks to cross state lines. This made Charlotte an important banking center and led to more growth as industries and newcomers made Charlotte their home. Charlotte had gone from field to factory to finance. Newcomers came from around the country and from all over the world, making Charlotte a more diverse and multicultural city.

You can see to your right what Levine Museum looks like in today’s Charlotte.
Whirlwind of Growth
1970s-2010s

During the heyday of the textile mills, many banks opened across North Carolina. By the 1980s, the state had lost a lot of its mills, but the banks remained.

At the time, it was illegal for banks to operate across state lines. However, some North Carolina bankers found a loophole in the law. They purchased a bank in Florida. This led the way to Charlotte becoming the second largest banking center in the United States, after New York City.

The ATM machine that you’ve probably seen your parents use was even invented in Charlotte.

Think About It!

Why do you think the mills started to close in North Carolina? You can practice your research skills by looking it up online.

Answer It!

Do you think banks define Charlotte’s identity? How would you describe Charlotte’s identity?
Section 2: Growth & Change

Charlotte continued to grow and change rapidly after the 1980s. Skyscrapers popped up all over uptown. Construction was happening everywhere. In fact, orange and white striped construction cones were invented here. Charlotte’s international airport became a major hub. In 1983, Harvey Gantt became the city’s first African American mayor.

Women continued to fight for more roles in the workplace and politics. Before the 1970s, job ads were divided into jobs for men and women, discouraging women from even applying for jobs that weren’t considered feminine. That began to change in the 1970s.

Women also began to break barriers in politics and make changes for women across the country.
Some firsts for women in Charlotte politics include Sarah Stevenson, first African American woman on the school board, Liz Hair, first woman county commissioner, Sue Myrick, first woman mayor, and Vi Lyles, the first African American woman mayor.

Sarah Stevenson can be seen in the center of the photo on the left surrounded by students.

**Think About It!**

Do you think there are positives and negatives to Charlotte’s growth and change? Why?

**Answer It!**

Are women and men treated equally today? What changes are people still fighting for?
Section 3: A City of Newcomers

For many years after the Civil War, Charlotte did not have a lot of newcomers from other places, particularly other countries. That began to change as Charlotte became a large banking center and attracted people from all over the world to live and work here, not only in banking but in many other industries. People from all over the world are moving to Charlotte, but the biggest populations in Charlotte of those born outside the United States are from Latin American countries, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

In the photo below you will see grocery store items that can be found in Charlotte stores today. Some may look familiar to you and other unfamiliar. When people move to Charlotte from other parts of country and from around the world, they bring their culture with them, which includes food. As different cultures blend in Charlotte, it makes our city’s culture more diverse and enriches what it means to be a Charlottean.

Think About It!

What different cultures do you see represented in Charlotte? How do you connect with them?

Answer It!

As Charlotte continues to grow, what kind of changes would you like to see? Why?