

BANK BUILDINGS

Then and Now

NCBA members and friends were asked to send in photos of old bank buildings that are now being utilized for a different purpose. For the next several issues of the Carolina Banker, we will be featuring the submissions. Anyone with information and photos please e-mail sam@ncbankers.org. Here are three:



In 1946 Cooperative Savings and Loan (now Cooperative Bank) purchased the Firestone Building on Front Street in Wilmington, NC, for its new home office. The move into the new headquarters building took place in 1948—the year of the first Azalea Festival. Today, the old office is now a downtown restaurant; circa 1928. “I have eaten there several times and enjoyed the private dining area which was my grandfather’s office,” stated Rick Willetts, president of Cooperative Bank.



The Chatham Bank opened its first office in Siler City, NC, in 1902. In the beginning, the bank was located in a rental building. The building shown here on the corner of West Raleigh Street and North Chatham Avenue became The Chatham Bank’s official home in 1913. When the bank moved to a larger building in 1936, the vacated building housed a variety of other businesses throughout the 65 years to follow. The split level building served as a doctor’s office upstairs and half of the first floor became a barbershop. With the functionality of the bank’s safe intact, a jewelry store opened in the other half.

In 2001, the jewelers vacated the lower portion of the building. It then became home to North State Financial, which later became Old North State Trust, LLC, and the building was restored to its original use.



Tryon Federal Bank housed its retail banking operations in this building in Columbus, NC, from 1981 until it was sold to the Polk County Board of Commissioners in 1999. The Polk County government has transformed the 2,500-square-foot building into a multi-department building, which now includes the Sheriff’s Department crime lab, Emergency Management officials, an IT department, and the county’s Economic Development department. The Polk County Travel & Tourism staff will also move their offices to this location in the future.