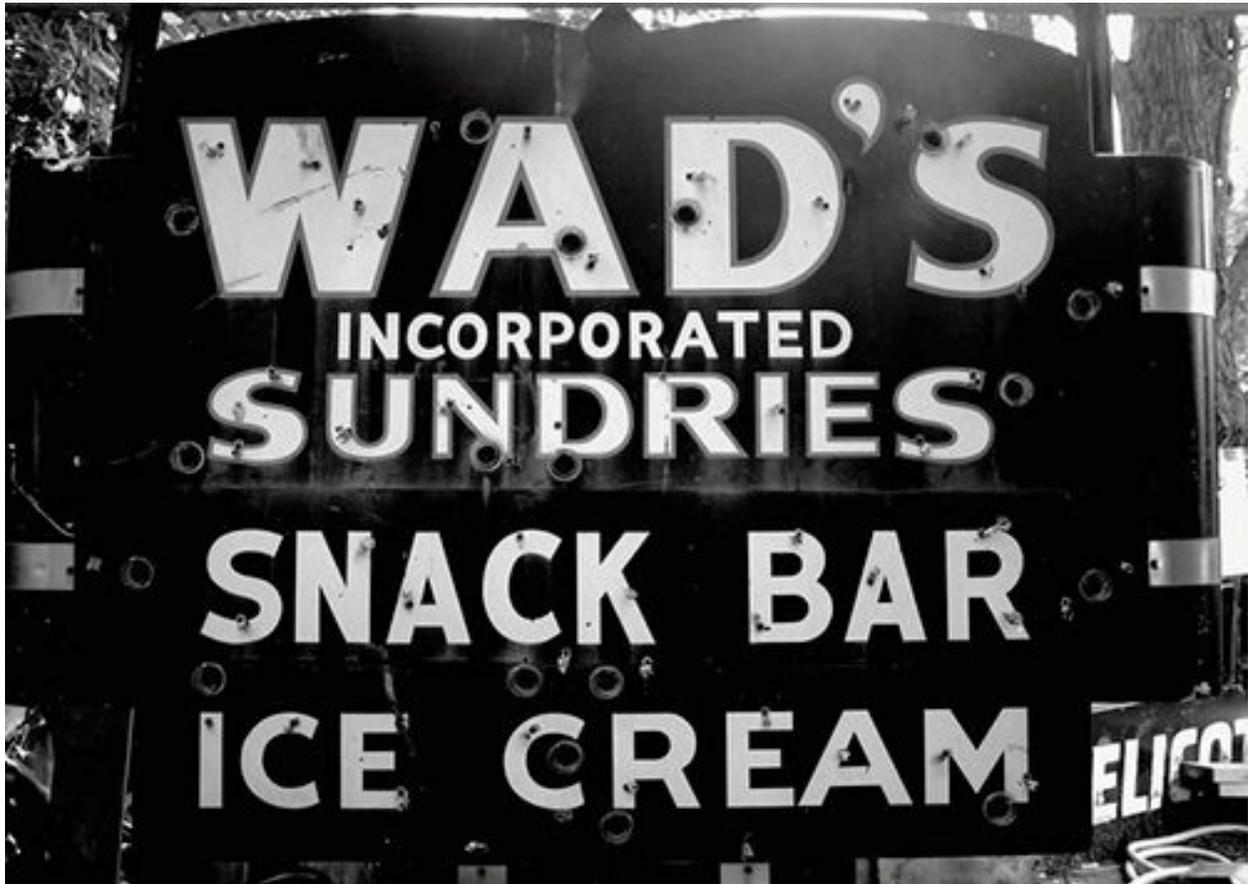


Charlotte Landmark Series from Andrew Taylor
Interview with Ellen Gurley
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E: Andrew Taylor, I just remember you being a star baseball player, when we were in school together. And now you are a well known photographer in town. So how long have you been a photographer and when did you know that it was more than a hobby?

A: The long answer is, that I don't really consider myself a "photographer". With these new cameras, and with programs like instagram and photoshop, it's not all that difficult for anyone to take a decent picture. It seems like everyone you meet is trying to be a photographer, and I would never put myself in the same category as those great artists who are truly deserving of being called "photographers". So, being a photographer has never been a label I would put on myself. I see this project more as a record of the city I love. With that said, I do love taking pictures. My father taught me at a very young age how to use his 35mm film camera, and I was always stealing it to snap pictures around the house. I really fell in love with photography when I learned how to develop my own film and use the dark room at Appalachian State.

E: I guess that you are mostly known for your series "Charlotte Landmark Series". This is an (2003 circa) intimate collection of our city's history; some ebbed away (some still in

business). You've captured the signage of places such as Wad's, the Drum, South 21, the Penguin, the Coffee Cup, and Price's Chicken Coop. Which, have you found, to be the most popular of this series? Which is your favourite? Which are upcoming?

A: I'm not sure I can say for certain that there is one Landmark that is more popular than all the others, but the top five would (in no particular order) would probably be 1) Wad's 2) Prices' Chicken Coop 3) Park n Shop 4) Coca-Cola Mural and 5) Copal Grill. I have nearly 175 pictures in the series, so I think I've covered most of the Landmarks in town. I'm always on the lookout for new Landmarks and I constantly ask for suggestions. So, I can't say what's coming up. I will say it's always exciting for me to find a new Landmark to photograph, and it's especially exciting when I get to post the photos and share them with my fans.

E: What is, then, your favourite subject, would it be landmarks? Landscapes? People? Nostalgia?

A: I have to admit, I'm terrible at photographing people. I love shooting old signs and figuring out the best or most interesting angle that will capture that feeling of nostalgia or character of the Landmark. Many of my photographs are grainy, or over exposed or super saturated. I wanted this series to have the feeling of a memory. Perhaps, you went to South 21 as a kid with your dad, and that big neon sign seemed larger than life. Maybe you drove past Park Terrace one day when the sunlight was glaring off it so brightly. So, the pictures aren't all perfect.

E: What would you cite as your riskiest photo shoot? Your most fun? Your least favourite?

A: Most of these places are fairly accessible and don't require much risk on my part. I will occasionally use the roof of my car to get a better angle on a sign, which always gets some funny looks from by-standers. Standing in the middle of Pecan and 7th Street to take photos of Hereos Aren't Hard To Find was probably the most dangerous.

E: You were recently married to a very beautiful, and equally photogenic, woman. Was it tough to hire someone else to do the capturing? Who did you choose and what was the end result?

A: It actually wasn't that difficult to find the right person. We used an amazing wedding photographer, Christina Lynn-Masterson. She was great because I had all these crazy ideas about where I wanted to do the engagement shoot and she let me direct her. We really worked together to come up with some incredible images. She followed my wife around to places like Thomas St., The Dish, Hong Kong, and Lunchbox records. It was a lot of fun. When it came time for the wedding, I trusted her so much that I just let her do her thing and didn't worry. I knew she would get the best shots from the day.

E: How do you feel about being at the other end of a lens?

A: I love having my picture taken, but I can't stand posing for pictures. When I see someone taking pictures, I always say, "don't wait, just shoot", I would prefer they capture the moment as it's happening and not some saccharine version of real life. In general, I feel like the best pictures of us all are taken when you aren't aware of the camera. If you look at the photos from our engagement shoot and our wedding, the very best images Christina captured were the ones when we weren't posing. When we were just goofing off and being ourselves, those are the photos that came to be the ones we cherished the most. I have a picture of Allison framed on our wall from our honeymoon that is probably the best picture I have ever taken. She was sitting on a wall in Amalfi looking at this little Italian city. I called

her name, and as she turned, I snapped this image of her. It's incredible because it's her being natural and beautiful.

E: Where can one view your prints? Buy your prints? Are they in any galleries?

A: I sell my prints at Ruby's Gifts in NoDa as well as on my website, www.TayloredPrints.com. You can also see about 20 of my photographs on display at Bank of North Carolina on Fairview Rd. The easiest way to buy a print is to "Friend" my Charlotte Landmark Series Facebook page and just send me an email with which print you want and what size.

E: You've been quoted as having dedicated the "Charlotte Landmark Series" series to your late grandfather, Clarence O. Kuester, Jr.; that is a very sweet gesture. Tell our readers a little bit about your relationship with him.

A: My grandfather was a very special man. Not simply because he was my grandfather, but his contributions to Charlotte as a volunteer are too many to list. He was the definition of a Southern Gentleman, and the lessons he taught me about being a man will be passed down to my son and my grandchildren. We could do an entire interview just on Clarence alone. He was an incredible person. The book is dedicated to him, because he loved this city more than any person I've ever met.

E: I understand that you have written a coffee table book. What is it called, and about and when can we expect it to be published? (Will you be writing more?)

A: I have a coffee table book that I co-wrote with my father Bob Taylor. It's called "Taylored Prints: Charlotte Landmark Series". At the moment, I do not have a publisher for the coffee table book, but I do self publish them through Shutterfly. Volume Two will hopefully be ready in November.

E: You have an ongoing love affair with Charlotte. Is your wife from here? Have you told her you never plan to leave here?

A: I have deep roots in Charlotte. My great-grandfather was born in his home on the corner of 7th St. and College St. Which makes me a 4th generation Charlottean. My wife is a 3rd generation Charlottean. I like to make a joke that our son will be a 7th generation Charlottean, but I don't think that's how it works. I'll never leave Charlotte.

E: Let's talk "Charlotte Divinity Series" and the "Charlotte Arbor Series". What are these and have they already begun?

A: I have plans for both of those and yes, I do have several images under the category of "The Divinity Series" and "Arbor Series". "The Divinity Series" will be a little easier to accomplish. I'm still struggling a little with how to pull off the "Arbor Series". I have some ideas, but it doesn't fit into the style of the "Landmark Series". "The Arbor Series" could take some time. Then again, "The Landmark Series" took 10 years to get to 'this' point.

E: What is next for Andrew Taylor? (Or anything you wished I'd asked, so our readers will know?)

A: Fatherhood is next. William Thomas Peabody Taylor is expect in May. I hope your readers will enjoy the interview and the "Landmark Series". It's very special to me.