

## Meet Mister Buster Boyd - in Person



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#### Mecklenburg - Meet The Man They Named The Bridge For

By JERRY REESE - News Staff Writer - the old Charlotte News - afternoon paper

Yes, Charlotte, there really IS a Buster Boyd.

And he IS the man they named the bridge after.

He is a 76-year-old, semi-retired farmer who lives in the Steel Creek community in the southwest section of Mecklenburg.

(The bridge is on US Highway 49 South at the Catawba River.)

His real name is William Monroe Boyd but in his own words: "I got the nickname when I was a little ol' fellow and it stuck like a leech."

DOESN'T KNOW

My Boyd says he doesn't know exactly why the bridge was named for him, and admits it has caused him some embarrassment.

"I go out and get introduced as "The man who built the bridge." I didn't build it, there were a lot of other men who did just as much work as I did to get the bridge there."

Mr. Boyd said the idea of naming the bridge after him came from Clarence O. Kuester, a hard working Chamber of Commerce booster in the 1920's. He quotes Mr. Kuester as saying "We're going to name it the Buster Boyd Bridge although it will make some people mad. You've done more work on it anybody else.

The tall aging farmer is quick to set the record straight: The idea of the whole project was to get a road from the river to Charlotte. The bridge was added later." Mr. Boyd headed a delegation that appeared before County Commissioners as early as 1916 asking for a road.

After many years of effort and dickering with county officials here and in York County, SC the bridge which completed the road was opened August 17, 1923. "Judge Clarkson of the State Supreme Court did more than anybody else to get the bridge project done" Mr. Boyd says. "He's the best friend I ever had."

He was talking about Judge Heriot Clarkson, father of Charlotte's resident Superior Court Judge Francis O. Clarkson. My Boyd credits Judge Clarkson with getting a test case through the State Supreme Court to make the road and bridge constitutional.

"North Carolina and South Carolina laws didn't dovetail" Mr. Boyd explained.

#### SHARED COST

Mecklenburg built the road from Charlotte to the river, York County built the road from York to the river, and they shared the cost of building the bridge. An issue of the Columbia State, dated Aug. 17, 1923, reported the bridge was built at a cost of \$103,446. Attendance at dedication ceremonies that day totaled over 12,000. Special guests included North Carolina Gov. Cameron Morrison, South Carolina Gov. McLeod, Frank Long of the Highway Commission, Sen. N Dial and Dr. J. B Johnson all of whom spoke at the occasion. Mr. Kuester presided. An additional highlight of the day came when World War I ace Elliott Springs flew a plane under the bridge.

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