

## **Reese, Addison Hardcastle** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Reese, Addison Hardcastle**

by Stephen R. Peck, 1994

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Addison Hardcastle Reese, banker and civic leader, was born in Baltimore County, Md., the son of Gordon Lippincott and Edith Octavia Ford Reese. His great-grandfather, John T. Ford, was owner of Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. His parents were divorced when he was three, and for a time he and an older brother lived with their mother. When she remarried and moved to Virginia, the two young men took an apartment in Baltimore, and the older brother cared for the younger one with occasional oversight by an aunt. After attending the public schools of Baltimore, Reese was graduated from Marston's University School in Riderwood, Md., and entered [Johns Hopkins University](#) <sup>[2]</sup> for three years. Leaving after his junior year, he worked for a short time as a laborer in a paper mill in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Back in Baltimore in 1930, Reese became a statistician for the Franck-Rosenburg Company, a private banking firm, but it soon was liquidated. In 1931 he became a clerk in the Bank of Sparrows Point, Md., and in 1932 he was appointed an assistant national bank examiner for the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency. During the period 1933–34 he was on loan to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which extended credit to failing banks. In this temporary employment he had an opportunity to examine the workings of banks and to discover mistakes that managers had made. In 1936 the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation was formed, and as a bank examiner Reese was sent to Richmond, Va., to determine which banks were qualified for the program.

In 1937, at age twenty-nine, he became the nation's youngest senior national bank examiner. In 1941 he was named director and vice-president of the Nicodemus National Bank in Hagerstown, Md., but from August 1942 until December 1945, during [World War II](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, he worked in statistical control in the Air Force. He was discharged with the rank of major.

In 1947 Reese began a period of service as president, chief executive officer, and director of the nineteen-branch County Trust Company of Maryland in Baltimore. He moved to [Charlotte](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, N.C., in 1951 as executive vice-president and director of the American Trust Company. In 1954 he became president and led the bank in a series of significant mergers—in 1957 with the Commercial National Bank of Charlotte, in 1959 with the First National Bank of [Raleigh](#) <sup>[5]</sup>, and in 1960 with the Security National Bank of [Greensboro](#) <sup>[6]</sup>—ultimately resulting in the formation of the North Carolina National Bank in 1960. Other mergers followed, including those with banks in [Chapel Hill](#) <sup>[7]</sup>, [North Wilkesboro](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, and [Wilmington](#) <sup>[9]</sup>. Under his leadership banking service was expanded in various ways, including the opening of a branch in London. Reese was named board chairman of the North Carolina National Bank in 1967, serving until he retired from the bank in 1973.

A significant force in the formation of the [University of North Carolina at Charlotte](#) <sup>[10]</sup>, Reese was a strong supporter of the school from 1956, when it was the small, two-year Charlotte College, until it became a four-year institution and eventually part of the Consolidated [University of North Carolina system](#) <sup>[11]</sup> in 1965. The administration building on that campus now bears his name in recognition of his efforts and support. He was awarded the honorary LL.D. degree by the university in 1968. Also interested in art, Reese supported the [Mint Museum of Art](#) <sup>[12]</sup> in Charlotte and encouraged the use of works of art in the banks under his care.

Reese served as president of the Association of Reserve City Bankers, a director of the [American Bankers Association](#) <sup>[13]</sup>, a trustee of the foundation of full service banks, and a director and member of the Program Committee of the International Monetary Conference in 1972. He was married in 1936 to Gertrude Rasin Craig of Baltimore. They had no children. A [Democrat](#) <sup>[14]</sup> and a member of Christ Episcopal Church, he died of cancer in Charlotte and was buried in Baltimore.

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### Additional Resources:

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### Subjects:

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### Authors:

[Peck, Stephen R.](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

### Origin - location:

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[Wilmington](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

[Wilkes County](#) <sup>[24]</sup>

[Wilkesboro](#) <sup>[25]</sup>

[Guilford County](#) <sup>[26]</sup>

[Greensboro](#) <sup>[27]</sup>

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[Charlotte](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

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