

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CARY

The Town of Cary, located in Wake and Chatham Counties, is in North Carolina's Piedmont region. The Town is located just southwest of the City of Raleigh, which serves as both the state capital and Wake County seat. Cary is a major hub of residential development for employees of the State of North Carolina, North Carolina State University and the Research Triangle Park—an industrial, governmental and scientific research area adjacent to the northwest Town limits. Cary also boasts a substantial mix of non-residential development including several major office parks and retail centers.

Cary began as a settlement called Bradford's Ordinary in 1750. In 1854, a farmer and lumber man named Frank Page bought three hundred acres of land and established several enterprises, including a sawmill, general store, inn and Post Office. Page named his development Cary after Mr. Samuel Fenton Cary, a prohibition leader from Ohio whom he admired. The extension of the railroad through Cary enabled the Town to flourish, and on April 6, 1871, the Town of Cary was incorporated.

A prestigious, private boarding school developed in Cary during the late 1800's. This school later became famous as the first public high school in North Carolina. The school was located on the site currently occupied by Cary Elementary School. In 2002, the Wake County School System began building a new elementary school on the same site. The Town reached an agreement with the school system to purchase the former Cary Elementary School building and has plans to renovate it for use within Cary's Cultural Arts program.

In 1963, the State Legislature amended the Town's charter to provide for a Council-Manager form of Government. One council member is elected from each of four voting districts, and two council members and the mayor are elected at-large.

The 1990 Decennial Census reported the Town's population to be 44,276. The 2000 Decennial Census reported a population of 94,536, indicating a growth rate of 114% since 1990, which was an average of 11.3% per year. The Town of Cary's Planning Department estimates Cary's April 1, 2008 population at 129,066 representing an average annual growth rate of 4.6% since 2000.

