

Carpenter Historic District Driving Tour

CARY, NORTH CAROLINA



This is one of a series of tours developed for Cary's sesquicentennial celebration in 2021. These tours celebrate Cary's past, present and future by guiding participants to many significant and interesting places throughout our community. Share your tour experiences and photos on social media using #Cary150Tours.

The tours are not comprehensive; there is much more to learn about Cary than can be included in a tour designed to be completed within an hour. Visit www.cary150.org to learn more about Cary's 150th anniversary celebration, find other tours, share your stories, and see what else is happening in 2021 and beyond!

Refer to the map for the approximate tour locations and visit them in any order you prefer. Please drive safely and be respectful of private property. Circumstances might prevent stopping or parking at some tour stops. If you exit your car, please adhere to appropriate COVID-19 guidelines.

Cary's History

The earliest known inhabitants of present-day Wake County were Tuscarora Native Americans. Around 1790, John Bradford operated an "Ordinary", or inn, and the community was known as Bradford's Ordinary. About 1871, Allison Francis "Frank" Page and his wife Catherine Raboteau Page built a hotel to serve railroad passengers (now the Page-Walker Arts & History Center). In 1871, the Town was incorporated and named for Samuel Fenton Cary of Ohio, whom Frank Page admired. Cary began as a small farming community and remained that way until about 50 years ago when Research Triangle Park was created. Today, Cary is a thriving community with almost 180,000 residents.



Carpenter National Register Historic District

Among the bustling expansion and commercial development of Cary's western region, we invite you to discover a stretch of road that takes you back to the rural farming community of historic Carpenter Village. As the modern world advanced all around them, these fields of crops, red barns, and old feed stores have stood the test of time. This tour will bring you back to the old family farm setting at the turn of the 20th century. The Carpenter Historic District includes 210 acres and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000. Many of the residents and business owners have deep roots in the Carpenter community and strive to preserve the historic properties there. In addition, the Town of Cary has saved three significant properties by purchasing them for public use (C.F. Ferrell Store and Warehouses, Good Hope Farm and Carpenter Park).

Carpenter Village and the Railroad

The Durham and Southern Railroad arrived in Carpenter as a result of the boom of bright leaf tobacco. Rural Piedmont of North Carolina became a spider web of train tracks that were used to transport tobacco harvests from the family farms "down east" to the distribution hubs of the Durham Tobacco Markets. Steam engines required water and fuel to make their way across the landscapes, so water towers were built by the various railroad companies along the routes. Becoming a refueling stop on the railroad line was what transformed a completely rural landscape into a village of commerce and connection with the wider world. The CSX Railroad, a refueling tower, and a few family farms are what authored the story of how Carpenter Village first made it onto the map.

1. Carpenter Farm Supply Company

1933 Morrisville–Carpenter Road



The focal point of the crossroads is the Carpenter Farm Supply Company. Built in several stages, the building is an unusually prominent example of a crossroads commercial building. The one-story frame portion of the building was built by William Henry Carpenter in 1895 as a replacement for an earlier Carpenter family store. The establishment was greatly expanded in 1916 with the addition of a 2-story brick building adjacent to the earlier store. This larger brick store is an excellent example of store buildings built in Wake County's incorporated towns during the period. During his life, William

Henry Carpenter served as deputy sheriff, a member of the school board and postmaster – the original Carpenter post office remains inside the store. Carpenter family descendants still own and operate this farm supply business. If you choose to visit the store, you will literally step back in time as you walk on the same floorboards that have been there for more than 100 years! This property was designated a Cary Landmark in 2010.

2. Farmers' Cooperative & Meeting Hall

1933 Morrisville–Carpenter Road

Located directly across the road from Carpenter Farm Supply is this second Carpenter store. Folklore from both the Carpenter family and other local residents say that this building, known by long-time residents as the "Union Hall", was built in the late 19th century to serve as a farmers cooperative store, with an upstairs meeting room for a farmer's organization. It is also said to have served as a Masonic lodge for the Junior Order of Masons in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Records of the Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union indicate that a local chapter met in Carpenter from 1912 until at least 1920. The store remains in operation by the Carpenter family as a feed and seed store. This property was designated a Cary Landmark in 2010.



3. C. F. Ferrell Store & Warehouses

1928 Morrisville–Carpenter Road

This two-story frame building is an excellent example of a country store. For many years, Charlie F. Ferrell operated his store in partnership with Mallie Butts. In addition to this general merchandise business, from the 1910s through the early 1930s, Ferrell operated several businesses including a sawmill, grist mill and cotton gin. The store closed with the death of Mr. Ferrell in 1933. The Edwards family reopened the store in 1936 and ran it until 1958. Later it housed an antiques shop. The building was moved a few yards to the east of its original location next to the railroad tracks when Morrisville–Carpenter Road was straightened in the 1940s. It is said that the Carpenter post office would move between Carpenter Farm Supply and the Ferrell store, depending upon which party (Democrat or Republican) was in power at the time. Some original items remain in the store today, including an old rope-and-pulley elevator. The



larger warehouse was built as a storage facility for Ferrell's store. It is a one-story frame warehouse that resembles a railroad depot. The smaller warehouse served as a fertilizer shed until a few years ago. It was originally located on the south side of Morrisville–Carpenter Road, just west of the railroad tracks, but was moved to this location in the 1920s. In 2009, the Town of Cary purchased this property, and a park is planned for this site in the future. The buildings will be maintained and integrated into the park.

4. Good Hope Baptist Church

6628 Good Hope Church Road



Long before the days of modern transportation, it was necessary for families to worship in places easily reached by walking or horse and buggy. Having a strong desire for a place where the people of Carpenter could meet, pray and worship locally, the Lemuel M. Morgan family donated land for a church in 1880. Today, this land is



located just across NC Highway 55 on Carpenter Fire Station Road where the Morgan family cemetery still stands. Like many churches at that time, this new congregation of believers met under a handmade brush arbor (pictured left) until Lemuel Morgan, with the help of his family, built a plank board church on the property (shown right). They named their new church Good Hope Baptist Church. As the community and congregation grew, the members of Good Hope Baptist Church decided to relocate the church. The original plank board church built by the Morgan family was taken apart, with every board numbered and labeled just like a puzzle, then reassembled exactly as it was.

5. Phillips Farm

6701 Good Hope Church Road

Phillips Farms is proud of its long history of family ownership and quality farm products serving central North Carolina for more than 100 years. Lee Phillips, the current owner, purchased Phillips Farms from his grandfather William Busbee Ennis's estate in 1976. The farm's primary crops were straw, hay and tobacco. In 1996, Phillips Farms began a successful strawberry picking farm frequented by thousands of adults and their children every year. In response to public health concerns and changes in the market, Phillips Farms ceased farming tobacco products in 1998 but still offers a variety of agricultural products for sale as well as seasonal agritourism events throughout the year.



6. Mallie & Cora Butts Farm

1604 Morrisville-Carpenter Road

The Butts farm was established in the late 19th century. Mallie Butts was C.F. Ferrell's partner in the general store business from at least 1909 through 1914. He shows up in later years as the community's undertaker. Local residents remember that the undertaker's business was located directly across Morrisville-Carpenter Road from this farmhouse. Later, Butts moved his undertaking business to Apex. It was the precursor to Apex Funeral Home, a business still in operation.



7. Bill Sears House

1600 Morrisville-Carpenter Road

Built ca. 1905 by Bill Sears, this house was later owned by members of the Butts family for some time. Omer and Betty Lou Ferrell bought the property from the Butts family in the 1960s and operated a farm here until the 2000s. According to a 2006 conversation with Betty Lou Ferrell, the cabin on the property was moved so that it would be saved. Betty Lou Ferrell was at least the fourth generation to live in this area and was related to the Upchurches, Ferrells and Williamses from this area. The property continues to be owned by the Ferrells.



8. Good Hope Farm (previously called A. M. Howard Farm)

1580 Morrisville-Carpenter Rd

This award-winning organic urban agricultural project connects our farming legacy to an innovative and resilient future through food security, agricultural education, and environmental conservation. The farmhouse was probably built in the 1910s. Several original outbuildings, including a livestock barn, corn crib, ham house, tobacco grading shed and packhouse, stand behind the house. A. M. Howard bought the



property in the 1930s and farmed tobacco here until 2006. In 2007, a development plan had threatened the A. M. Howard Farm, and the Town of Cary purchased it, along with vacant land across Morrisville-Carpenter Road that is now Carpenter Park. Today the farm serves as an organic teaching farm that connects beginning farmers to affordable plots of land and training opportunities to launch their own agribusinesses. Community engagement, education events, and agritourism celebrations take place on the property and connect the public to local food and local cultural history. To learn more about agritours and other events going on at the farm, visit townofcary.org/goodhopefarm.



8

9. Carpenter Park (and Community Garden)

4420 Louis Stephens Drive

Once part of the original A.M. Howard family homestead (now known as Good Hope Farm), this 16-acre neighborhood park features trails, a playground and athletic facilities, and it serves as the memorial site for Flights AE3379 and AE3378. To connect the current park to the history of the property, the Town of Cary set aside space for a large community garden and an outdoor classroom for agricultural education. Carpenter Park Community Garden offers garden plot rentals to more than 30 families as well as public education beds for groups and volunteers to connect to garden-fresh food. Even the buildings on the park property are designed to mimic the structural design and color of the historic Good Hope Farm's barns situated across the street so that park guests can enjoy the visual synergy of Cary's agricultural past. To learn more, visit townofcary.org/carpenterpark.



9

10. New Hope Church Road Trailhead Park & American Tobacco Trail

2575 New Hope Church Road



10

The New Hope Church Road Trailhead Park is located in northwest Cary on 12 acres of land. The park is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of New Hope Church Road and the American Tobacco Trail. The park serves as an important parking and restroom facility for the American Tobacco Trail, a 22-mile long multi-use trail that crosses Wake, Chatham and Durham Counties. The restroom structure was designed to blend with the architectural context of the area, being derived from vernacular barn and shelter precedents in the surrounding area. To learn more about the American Tobacco Trail, visit www.townofcary.org/greenways.

This tour includes several highlights of Cary's rich history, but it represents only a portion of a much larger story. Some of the material for this tour was provided by the Friends of Page-Walker Hotel, *Carpenter, N.C. As I Remember and What I Have Learned* by Bryan Edwards and the 2021 edition of *Cary Through The Years*. To learn more about our local history, visit Cary150.org.

TOWN of CARY



10

#10 stop is an approximate 8 minute drive from #9 stop.

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- 1. **Carpenter Farm Supply Company** 1933 Morrisville-Carpenter Road
- 2. **Farmers' Cooperative & Meeting Hall** 1933 Morrisville-Carpenter Road
- 3. **C. F. Ferrell Store & Warehouses** 1928 Morrisville-Carpenter Road
- 4. **Good Hope Baptist Church** 6628 Good Hope Church Road
- 5. **Phillips Farm** 6701 Good Hope Church Road
- 6. **Mallie & Cora Butts Farm** 1604 Morrisville-Carpenter Road
- 7. **Bill Sears House** 1600 Morrisville-Carpenter Road
- 8. **Good Hope Farm (previously called A. M. Howard Farm)**
1580 Morrisville-Carpenter Rd
- 9. **Carpenter Park (and Community Garden)** 4420 Louis Stephens Drive
- 10. **New Hope Church Road Trailhead Park & American Tobacco Trail**
2575 New Hope Church Road

Please note: Road construction/re-alignment will continue through 2022 and some street names may change.

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