

Cary First Christian Church & The Friends of the Page-Walker

Walking Tour

Cary First Christian Church Cemetery

300 W. CORNWALL ROAD, CARY, NC

Welcome to Cary First Christian Church Cemetery, established in 1866 on the site where African American church members held their first meeting in a brush arbor in 1868. Members continued to worship at this site for 15 years before moving into their first church building in 1883 near present-day Cary Elementary School. In 1968, they built and moved to their current building at 1109 Evans Road. The cemetery is the only remaining vestige of the congregation at this location.

This guide will take you for a walk through the history of Cary's African American community, as told through the stories of people resting here. You will find the first African American businessman in Cary; founders of the Cary Elementary School (for Colored Children); businessmen, farmers, and laborers; church founders, leaders, and supporters; community organizers; large land owners; educators; WWI, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam War veterans; free and formerly enslaved African Americans and people of multiracial backgrounds. You will see grave sites of prominent families and grave sites of unknown persons, including one marked by a rare petrified wooden marker. The cemetery, which has always been open to all African Americans in Cary for burial, regardless of church affiliation, dates back to 1866. All of the people buried here contributed to the early and ongoing development and welfare of Cary. We highlight some of their stories in this guide.

The 1.39 acre cemetery is owned and maintained by Cary First Christian Church and holds approximately 262 burials as of 2021. Of these 262 burials, around 102 known persons are buried in graves with markers that display names and dates. About 160 persons are buried in graves either unmarked or marked with boulders, piles of stones, quartz, and uninscribed or unreadable stone, concrete, marble, and granite. Some are buried in graves marked with uninscribed concrete slabs placed by the church after an archeological survey revealed that 139 of the 160 unmarked graves had been unknown until 2002. The vinyl stickers you see on these grave markers correspond to locations on a map produced by the archeological survey. Through the tireless efforts of church member, Sallie Jones, and additional research by church volunteers and the Friends of the Page-Walker, 113 of the people buried in unmarked graves or graves with unreadable markers have been identified. 47 unknown persons still remain to be identified.

Many of the readable grave markers in the cemetery display funerary art, including cherubs and crowns, stars, clasping and praying hands, laurel branches, ivy vines, and engraved interlocking chains and letters such as "FLT" for Friendship, Love, and Trust that denote the deceased's affiliation with the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. Many grave sites in the cemetery are marked by simple pieces of rock with no inscriptions, or are not marked at all, and unfortunately we may never know the names of some of the people buried here.

Enjoy your exploration of this historic landmark-designated cemetery and visit the Cary First Christian Church website (caryfirst.org) and Friends of the Page-Walker website (friendsofthewalker.org) for more information about the people and stories of Cary's history.

For a deeper exploration of the cemetery and the people buried here, visit www.caryfirst.org/aboutour-history/our-cemetery/.

Names in **bold** are persons buried at Cary First Christian Church Cemetery (CFCCC), in either marked or unmarked graves.

- 1 **Jennie Beckwith's** gravestone bears one of the earliest marked death dates in the cemetery (b. 6 Sep 1864 - d. 31 Jan 1896). Her husband John was born into enslavement and was 9 years old when the Civil War ended. His memories were recorded in *U.S., Interviews with Former Slaves, 1936-1938*. John was a farmer and later a beloved custodian at Cary High School when it was located on Academy St. He was remembered for ringing the bell, signalling to students that they should all be in their seats in their classrooms. He is buried in an unmarked grave at Wake County Home Cemetery off Noble Road near Five Points in Raleigh. Several other Beckwith family members are buried at CFCCC in unmarked graves,



including John and Jennie's son **Matthew** (b. 1880 – d. 1956) and Matthew's wife **Alice** (b. 1887 – d. 21 Jun 1971); and John and Jennie's daughter **Nora** (b. 1879 – d. 1959). Alice was the daughter of Harry and Sallie Johnson; East Johnson Street in northern Cary is named for her family and is the location of Kingswood Elementary School. Matthew and Alice's son **Fletcher "Jack" Beckwith** (b. 17 May 1925 – d. 29 Nov 1972) was a WWII veteran and is buried in CFCC Cemetery in a marked grave in a different section of the cemetery. Alice's son **Harrie Jones** (b. 21 Mar 1900 – d. 2 Jul 1920) from a previous marriage was a WWI veteran and is also buried here in a marked grave near his half brother Fletcher. Fletcher's sisters **Lucinda Beckwith Page** (29 Dec 1919 – 13 Dec 1980) and **Virginia Beckwith Patterson** (b. 28 Apr 1920 – d. 5 Dec 1956) are buried here in unmarked graves, as is **Mary Alice Beckwith Mason** (b. 1911 – d. 1974), daughter of John and his second wife Rosa Satterfield Beckwith. *Pictured: John Beckwith*

- 2 **Jane Stroud** (b. 1834 – d. 12 Feb 1913) was the matriarch of the Stroud family. Her son Henry was one of the founding members of Cary First Christian Church and was present at the first service held under a brush arbor on this site. Her granddaughter Dora was the daughter of Jane's son Berry and a teacher at the first Cary Colored School, which stood not far from here on what was then Holleman Street. Dora was an active member of the church and a leader in securing funds for important projects. Dora's brothers **Herbert** (b. 1887 – d. 1958) and **Berry** (b. 5 Jul 1886 – d. 10 Feb 1923) are buried here near to their mother Virginia Hicks. Dora is buried in Carolina Biblical Gardens in Garner. *Pictured: Dora Stroud*



- 3 **Virginia Hicks** (b. 1864 – d. 26 Jan 1936), pictured, was the second wife of **Armistead (Umstead) Hicks** (b. 1845 – d. 21 July 1926). Umstead was one of the founding members of Cary First Christian Church and was present at the first service held under a brush arbor on this site. He is buried here in an unmarked grave. Virginia was first married to Berry Stroud, brother of Henry, one of the other five founding members of the church. Virginia is the mother of Dora, Berry, and Herbert Stroud.



- 4 **The Satterfield Family** was a large, multi-generational family in Cary. **Louis Satterfield** (b. 1845 – d. 1920) was the patriarch of the family. He was a farmer and also worked on the railroad at one time. He and his wife **Mary**, known as **Hawkins** (b. 1847 – d. 22 Feb 1922), are buried here in unmarked graves, likely near the Satterfield Family marker. Also buried here in unmarked graves are Louis and Mary's daughter **Alice** (b. 1867 – d. 1941) and son **Charlie**. Their daughter **Malinda Moore** (b. 1864 – d. 16 Mar 1947) is buried in a marked grave, along with two of her sons, **Arthur** (b. 10 Sep 1888 – d. 11 May 1920) and **Alexander** (b. 4 Jul 1909 – d. 5 Sep 1926). Arthur was a WWI veteran. Malinda's husband **Sam Moore** (b. 1846 – 20 Nov 1944) is buried here in an unmarked grave. Louis's granddaughter **Mazie** (b. 1903 – d. 1987) – daughter of Oscar – and her sons **Calvin** (b. 1925 – d. 2002) and **Samuel** (1930-1940) are also buried here, Mazie in a marked grave and Calvin and Samuel in unmarked graves. *Pictured: Mazie Satterfield*



- 5 **Wooden Grave Marker** This marker is a rare segmental-arched wooden headstone, dating back to the 1800s. There are no markings or engravings remaining to enable us to know who is buried here.



- 6 **Susie Turner Cherry** (b. 15 Apr 1897 – d. 11 Feb 1925) was the daughter of **Robert Turner** (b. 1 Apr 1864 – d. 17 Jan 1953) and **Lucy Turner** (b. Aug 1866 – d. 6 Jul 1953), both also buried here in unmarked graves. Susie married Frank Cherry in New York City in 1916. Frank was originally from Greenville, NC and is buried there, but lived quite a bit of his life in New York City. Susie and Frank had a son **Theodore** (b. 16 Aug 1914 – d. 20 Sep 1914), who died as an infant and is buried here in an unmarked grave. Susie had an older brother **R.D. Turner** (b. 1893 – d. 1893) and sister **Hattie Turner** (b. 1891 – d. 1891), who died as infants and are buried in marked graves in another section of the cemetery. One of Susie's other sisters **Effie Turner Jones** (b. 28 Apr 1887 – d. 25 Apr 1962) served on the Committee for a New Elementary School in the Colored Community, and was instrumental in establishing a school for African American children in 1937 after the Cary Colored School near the present day Cary Elementary School burned down. The new Cary Elementary School (for Colored Children) went on to become



Kingswood Elementary School. Effie is buried here in an unmarked grave, as are her sons **Herbert** (b. 1928 – d. 1928) and **Edward** (b. 7 Jun 1913 – d. 25 Mar 1975). Another of Susie's sisters **Mattie Turner Williams** (b. 1888 – d. 1965) is also buried here in an unmarked grave.

Pictured: Lucy and Robert Turner

- 7 A number of Joneses (not necessarily related to each other) are buried here in different sections of the cemetery, some in unmarked graves. **Nazareth (Naz) B. Jones** (b. 1868 – d. 8 Apr 1931) was a church, community, and business leader. He was the partner of Arch Arrington, Sr. The two of them together operated the first African American owned business in downtown Cary in the early 1900s. Naz mended shoes and Arch operated a barber shop, offering services for both African American and white people.

- 8 **The Cotton Family** was a large, multi-generational family in Cary. Many members are buried here, some in unmarked graves. **Willis Cotton** (b. 4 Mar 1867 – d. 5 Jun 1942), the patriarch of the family, was a highly respected farmer and active in civic life, serving on the African American School Committee. In 1929, he submitted to *The News and Observer* a 20-pound cabbage that he had grown, "large enough to furnish the vegetable ration of a considerable number of families." Willis's first wife **Anna Cotton** (b. 1868 – d. 14 Dec 1923) is buried here, along with some of their children: **Clarence Cotton** (b. 19 Sep 1890 – d. 29 Oct 1958, a WWI veteran buried in another section of the cemetery); **James Alfred (J.A.) Cotton** (b. 1892 – 1925), a WWI veteran; **Charlie Cotton** (b. 1908 – d. 1979), **Mack Cotton** (b. 1893 – d. 1903); and **Vermel Cotton**, (b. 1887 – d. 1921). Willis' second wife **Augusta Cotton** (b. 7 Apr 1883 – d. 26 Aug 1931) is also buried here. Other children buried here in unmarked graves include: **Amanda** (b. 1912 – d. 1936), **Annie** (b. 1909 – d. 1936), and **Tommy** (b. 1901 – d. 1961).

Pictured: Willis Cotton

Lonnie Cotton (b. 3 Feb 1886 – d. 26 Nov 1953), son of Levi and Harriet Cotton, is buried here in an unmarked grave. He and his wife Evelena used to transport mail back and forth from the train station to the post office when the post office was located across from where Ashworth's Drug Store now stands. Evelena, who was known for wearing a coat all year round, would also deliver telegrams to Cary families during WWII and many families' hearts sank when they saw her coming to the door because those telegrams often carried bad news. Evelena is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Raleigh. *Painting by Tina Winters Taylor of Lonnie and Evelena Cotton*



- 9 **William H. Simmons** (b. 25 Oct 1888 – d. 29 Dec 1916) was the son of **William (Bill) Simmons** (b. 1850 – d. 25 Dec 1920) and **Bethenia Simmons** (b. 1857 – d. 1920), both buried here in unmarked graves. Bill's mother Sarah was enslaved by Frank Page, founder of Cary. One of Bill and Bethenia's other sons **Ed Simmons** (b. 1896 – d. Nov. 1987) lived on E. Cornwall Rd., not far from the CFCC Cemetery. His house at 112 E. Cornwall Road is the only house still standing of the many homes of African American families who lived in the Cornwall Road area in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Ed Simmons Court is named for him. And Bethenia Place is named for his mother. Ed Simmons and his wife **Willie Ann** (b. 1901 – d. 30 Aug 1972) are also buried here in unmarked graves.

- 10 **The Jones Family** members in this section of the cemetery are descended from **James H. Jones** (b. 1888 – d. 1949) and **Emily Arrington Jones** (b. 20 Dec 1890 – d. 25 Apr 1975). Among the Jones family members is Emily's daughter **Sallie Jones**, still living at age 96! She is responsible for preserving the Cary First Christian Church Cemetery. Sallie's tireless and dedicated efforts led to the identification of many of the names of persons buried in unmarked graves. Emily's husband James is also buried here in a marked grave. Their sons **Charlie Jones** and **Bruce Jones** (b. 29 Dec 1926 – d. 8 Apr 2001) were WWII veterans. Bruce is buried here in a marked grave. Charlie is buried in the veterans section at Carolina Biblical Gardens in Garner.



Left to right: Emily Arrington Jones, Sallie Jones, Charlie Jones, Bruce Jones



Left to right: Alfred Arrington, Arch Arrington, Sr., Sallie Blake Arrington, Arch Arrington, Jr., Goelet Arrington, Clyde Louis Arrington, Emerson "Dick" Arrington, Ettie Arrington

11 The Arrington Family is one of the most prominent African American families in Cary. Many family members are buried here across multiple generations, including patriarch **Alfred Arrington** (b. 1 May 1829 – d. 9 Feb 1911), whose gravestone bears the earliest marked birth date in the cemetery. Alfred was the son of an enslaver on a plantation in Warren County, where he learned many trades. Alfred was freed before the Civil War and came to Cary during the late 1860s. Both he and his son, **Arch Arrington, Sr.** (b. 18 Apr 1859 – d. 17 Jun 1933) were craftsmen and became large landowners in north central Cary.

Arch, Sr. was one of the first African American businessmen and community leaders in Cary. He married **Sallie Blake** (b. 8 Jun 1859 – d. 11 Aug 1953), sister of John Addison Blake, the founder of the Union Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church on North Academy Street in Cary. Arch and Sallie's son **Arch Arrington, Jr.** (b. 25 May 1898 – d. 23 Jul 1953) organized the African American community to build a new school for African American children in 1937 after the Cary Colored School near the present day Cary Elementary School burned down. Arch, Jr.'s brother Goelet Arrington and sister Emily donated the land to the Wake County School System for the school, which went on to become Kingswood Elementary School, located at 200 East Johnson Street.

Goelet was also a WWI Veteran, along with his brother **Exum** (b. 23 Aug 1881 – d. 29 Oct 1940). Arch, Jr.'s sons **Clyde Louis** (b. 9 Nov 1924 – d. 28 May 2012) and Arch L. were WWII veterans. His son **Emerson "Dick"** (b. 28 Feb 1928 – d. 17 Dec 1997), was a Korean War veteran.

Ettie Arrington (b. 16 Jun 1883 – d. 30 Mar 1975), the oldest child of Arch, Sr., was a landowner, business person, historian, substitute teacher, and Sunday School teacher.

Ella Arrington Williams-Vinson (b. 1 May 1931 – d. 21 Jun 2013) was the granddaughter of Arch Arrington, Sr. and daughter of Arch Arrington, Jr. and **Eliza Arrington** (b. 4 Sep 1906 – d. 16 May 1984). Ella was a lifelong educator, teaching at the Cary Elementary School (for Colored Children) – which members of her family helped to establish and which she attended as a child (the school went on to become Kingswood Elementary School) – and also teaching at Briarcliff Elementary School, Farmington Woods Elementary School, and Apex Elementary School. Ella was a leader and very active in the community and is also the author of two books about Cary's African American history, *Both Sides of the Tracks, Volume I and II*.



Ella Arrington Williams-Vinson and Eliza Rogers Arrington

12 James (Jim) Rodgers (b. 22 Sep 1877 – d. 1923) was the patriarch of the Rodgers family, an early Cary family who lived on E. Park Street. Jim owned and farmed a large amount of land in south Cary. His youngest daughter Mae remembered the farm extending as far as she could see. Jim also worked at the saw mill earlier in his life. His daughter Eliza married Arch Arrington, Jr. and is buried in the Arrington plot. His son **James E. Rogers** (b. 1900 – d. 10 Apr 1944) is buried in the CFCC Cemetery in an unmarked grave. The Rodgers name changed to Rogers.

13 Delmar (Delma) (b. 1 Jan 1914 – d. 18 Apr 1979) and **Annie Reaves** (b. 1 Jun 1914 – d. 9 Mar 1991) were husband and wife. Delmar was the son of **Connie** (b. 16 Jun 1887 – d. 6 Feb 1963) and **Sallie Lillian Reaves** (b. 1895 – d. 1984), who are both also buried nearby in unmarked graves. Lillian, as she was known, was the daughter of Bob and Lucy Turner. Connie and Lillian were members of the Committee for a New Elementary School in the Colored Community, and were instrumental in establishing a school for African American children in 1937 after the Cary Colored School near the present day Cary Elementary School burned down. The new Cary Elementary School (for Colored Children) went on to



Connie Reaves, Lillian Turner Reaves, Rudolph Reaves

become Kingswood Elementary School. Two of Connie and Lillian's other sons, **Howard** (b. 1935 – d. 13 Jun 1944) and **Robert** (b. 1932 – d. 13 Jun 1944), died tragically in a drowning accident while trying to save each other and are buried nearby in unmarked graves. Connie and Lillian's daughter, Jeanette Reaves Evans, volunteered as manager of the Dorcas Shop for over 20 years and petitioned the state in the 1960s to pave Evans Road. Jeanette is buried at the Turner-Evans Family Cemetery. Another daughter, **Denise Reaves Patterson** (b. 1924 – d. 2009), is buried in CFCC Cemetery. Connie and Lillian's son, Rudolph was a WWII veteran. Lillian's brother, Robert David Turner is buried at the Turner-Evans Family Cemetery. He attended St. Augustine's College with the renowned Delaney sisters and courted one of them for a short while.

14 John Ferrell (b. 27 Jun 1912 – d. 15 Dec 1982) was the son of Ernest Bunn (E. B.) Ferrell, who represented the African American Schools in Cary on the Advisory Board of the Wake County Board of Education in the 1950s. He and his wife Lovie sold land to the Wake County School System for the expansion of Kingswood Elementary School in the 1950s and 60s. Lovie was the daughter of Harry and Sallie Johnson; East Johnson Street in northern Cary is named for the Johnson family. Ferrell Street in northern Cary is named for the Ferrell family. Ernest Ferrell is buried in the Turner-Evans Family Cemetery at 800 Old Apex Road. John's wife **Mary** (b. 5 Oct 1915 – d. 10 Jun 1995) is buried here and was the daughter of Connie and Lillian Reaves. John and Mary's son **Al Harry** (b. 19 Jul 1952 – d. 19 Jul 1954) died tragically in a choking accident on his second birthday and is buried nearby. His gravestone was placed between his parents' gravestones by his sister Kennie Mae Ferrell Hinton. Another son **John Mahlon Ferrell** (b. 12 Mar 1949 – d. 20 Jun 1966) is also buried nearby. Ernest's brother **James Ferrell** (b. 1891 – d. 1958) is buried here in an unmarked grave.



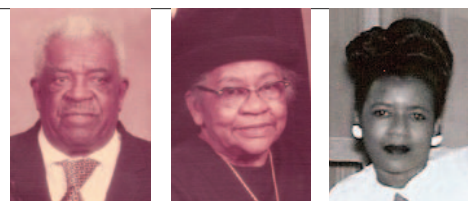
John Ferrell, Mary Reaves Ferrell

15 Clarence Cotton (b. 19 Sep 1890 – d. 29 Oct 1958), son of Willis Cotton, was a WWI veteran and was known to all as "Son" Cotton. He provided a place for all to gather on a Saturday or Sunday evening in the basement of his home near Chatham Street. He ran a jukebox and sold candy and cigarettes. Many African Americans enjoyed dancing and socializing at Clarence's place.

16 Reverend Isaac Boyd (b. 26 Dec 1850 – d. 5 Feb 1930), pictured, was one of the first pastors of Cary First Christian Church. He and his wife **Luvenia** (b. 20 Oct 1869 – d. 16 Jun 1930) came to Cary from Granville County sometime after they married in 1874 and raised 10 children here, several of whom are buried in this cemetery. Luvenia was a house servant in Granville County at age 11. She is buried here in an unmarked grave. Boyd Street in Cary is named for the Boyd family. Isaac's son **Henry** (b. 11 May 1888 – d. 23 Nov 1944) and Henry's wife **Othalia**, (b. 30 Sep 1910 – d. 8 Apr 1989) are buried here. Henry and Othalia's daughter **Viola** (b. 17 Sep 1933 – d. 10 Apr 1975) and her infant daughter **Betty Lou** (b. 10 Sep 1951 – d. 21 Dec 1951) are buried here in unmarked graves. Isaac's daughter **Truletta** (b. 1998 – d. 1947) married Goelet Arrington and is buried here in an unmarked grave. Goelet, a WWI veteran, is buried in Raleigh National Cemetery. Isaac's son **William** (b. 20 Aug 1890 – d. 6 Apr 1953) is a WWI veteran and is buried here an unmarked grave, along with his wife **Lillie** (b. 1894 – d. 2 Sep 1924). Isaac's son **Walter** (b. 15 Jul 1901 – d. 26 Dec 1952) is also buried here in an unmarked grave.



17 Clarence (C.A.) Pollard (b. 6 Mar 1892 – d. 10 Oct 1979) was a deacon and leader at Cary First Christian Church. He was known for never forgetting to say during prayer, "God, please bless this place we call Cary." His wife **Helen** (b. 1897 – d. 1980) and daughter **Blondell Pollard Mays** (b. 25 Feb 1917 – d. 30 Sep 1960) are buried nearby. Clarence and Helen's infant daughter **Doris** (b. 11 Feb 1939 – d. 31 Dec 1939) is buried here in an unmarked grave.



Clarence Pollard, Helen Pollard, Blondell Pollard Mays

18 Mildred (Millie) Ruffin (b. 1852 – d. 19 Dec 1913) was from Granville County and was the wife of **Shadrack (Shade) Ruffin** (b. 1844 – d. 1917), also buried here in an unmarked grave. Shade Ruffin was from Alamance County and was one of the founding members of Cary First Christian Church; he was present at the first service held under a brush arbor on this site and served as a deacon. Millie and Shade's daughter, Ada attended Franklinton Christian College and taught in Wake County for many years, including at the first Cary Colored School, which stood not far from here on what was then Holleman Street. Miss Ada, as she was known, taught at the school from 1909 – 1923 and was an inspiration to many African American students in Cary. Ada is buried in Hillcrest Cemetery in Raleigh. One of Millie and Shade's sons **Luther** (b. 1885 – d. 1920) is buried in CFCC Cemetery in an unmarked grave.



19 Ervin Scott (b. 27 Mar 1872 – d. 20 Aug 1907) married Etta Evans, daughter of Charlie and Matilda Evans, in 1897. Ervin died 10 years later. Etta married Willis Turner, Sr. in 1910 and died, likely as a result of complications from childbirth, in 1914. Etta Evans Scott Turner and infant were possibly the first persons buried in the Turner-Evans Family Cemetery; their grave marker bears the earliest burial date (see Turner-Evans Family Cemetery below). The death certificate for the infant identifies him as a boy named Norfelt Etta Turner, b. 17 Aug 1914 – d. 6 Sep 1914 (19 days old). The undertaker was A.S. Johnson. An interesting note was scribbled on the death certificate; perhaps by the undertaker: “No doctor. I guess cause of death was loss of mother.”

20 Mae Hopson (b. 1893 – d. 1997) lived to be 104 years old, making her the oldest person buried in this cemetery. During her 104 years, “Miss Sweet” as she was affectionately called, was a leader in the Union Bethel AME Church, keeping the books and teaching the young members the words to “We are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder.” She and her mother **Millie Hopson** (b. 1856 – d. 1946) were active supporters of education for Cary’s African American children. Mae served on the Committee for a New Elementary School in the Colored Community and fought hard to get a school established in 1937, which went on to become Kingswood Elementary School. Millie is buried here in an unmarked grave, as is one of her other daughters **Mazie Booker** (b. 1885 – d. 1917), her son **Nathaniel** (b. 1880 – d. 1908), and her nephew **John Wesley Hopson** (b. 1904 – d. 1978). Another of Millie’s daughter’s **Mollie** (b. 28 Feb 1878 – d. 17 Apr 1924) is buried here in a marked grave.

21 John (b. 1848 – d. 6 Jul 1921) and **Eliza Nichols** (b. 1859 – d. 4 Aug 1937) were a farming couple. Eliza was the sister of Addison Blake, the founder of the Union Bethel AME Church on North. Academy Street in Cary. Her memories were recorded in *U.S., Interviews with Former Slaves, 1936-1938*. She is one of three women buried in this cemetery whose narratives were recorded. The other two, **Martha Organ** (b. 1879 – d. 21 Feb 1945) and **Chaney Hews** (30 Jun 1866 – d. 20 Jan 1952), are buried in unmarked graves. *Pictured: Eliza Blake Nichols*



22 The George Washington Day Family was a large multiracial family living in Cary in 1880. The hand carved stone and engraved marker here are in memory of the family, but no bodies are buried here. The family was originally from Orange County, where a large number of multiracial families migrated from Virginia in the early 1800s. Although further research is required, it’s possible that this family is related, albeit distantly, to Thomas Day, the renowned furniture maker who left Virginia and settled in Milton, North Carolina in 1823.

23 Thomas (b. 17 Apr 1856 – 27 Aug 1925) and **Nannie Hawkins** (b. 25 Dec – 17 Mar 1915) were a farming couple. The Hawkins family is one of the earliest African American families in Cary. Also buried here are their son **Webster** (b. 9 Sep 1883 – d. 25 Mar 1911) and niece **Elizabeth** (b. 1873 – d. unknown). Webster’s daughter **Hortense** (b. 13 Dec 1909 – d. 22 May 1911) died tragically from a poisoning accident and is buried here in an unmarked grave. Family history tells us the Hawkins family made gravestones, along with the Satterfield family. Both families’ homes were on West Cornwall Road, very near this cemetery; it’s possible they made some of the gravestones here.



Did you know? The first acre of land for the cemetery was conveyed to the church congregation by J.J. Hines, a white minister from Craven County, some time between 1869 and 1877.

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Did you know?

The earliest marked death date at Cary First Christian Church Cemetery is that of Hattie Turner, who died as an infant in 1891.

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The earliest marked birth date at Cary First Christian Church Cemetery is that of Alfred Arrington, who was born in 1829.

The oldest known person buried at Cary First Christian Church Cemetery is Mae Hopson, "Miss Sweet," who died at age 104.

15

Did you know? The stories of approximately 2,300 formerly enslaved men and women were recorded in *U.S., Interviews with Former Slaves, 1936-1938* as part of a Federal Writers' Project in the 1930s. Three of these women are buried in this cemetery, two in unmarked graves (Chaney Hews and Martha Organ), and one in a marked grave (Eliza Nichols).

16

"WE SEEK TO UPHOLD THE MEMORY OF THE SOULS BURIED AT THE CEMETERY FOR THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES THAT PROVIDE US WITH INSIGHT ON HOW TO PERSEVERE IN CHALLENGING TIMES."

PASTOR MYCAL BRICKHOUSE

Did you know? A brush arbor, also known as a hush harbor or a bush arbor, was a secluded informal structure, often built with tree branches, set in places away from enslavers so that enslaved persons could meet to worship in private.

9

Did you know? The gravel drive running through the center of the cemetery was built as part of a 2003 Eagle Scout project after it was determined there were no burials in its path.

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Cary First Christian Church Cemetery

Did you know? The Blake family name among African Americans in Cary who are descended from Yancey Blake is associated with Asa Blake, Yancey's enslaver in Raleigh, North Carolina, from the time of Yancey's birth in 1819. Asa Blake is the great, great, great grandson of General at Sea Robert Blake, considered a founder of England's naval supremacy. Blake family members can trace their roots to the Balanta people in Africa.

21

Did you know? The Cary First Christian Church Cemetery was the first Landmark Designated Cemetery in Cary and in all of Wake County.

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Did you know? Cary First Christian Church Cemetery is the resting place of seven founders of Cary Elementary School (for Colored Children), which opened in 1937 and went on to become Kingswood Elementary School.

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Did you know? One fourth of the 86,000 troops from North Carolina in WWI were African American. Seven WWI and three WWII veterans are buried in Cary First Christian Church Cemetery, along with one Korean War veteran and two Vietnam War veterans.

Did you know? Cedar trees often mark the site of a cemetery. How many can you find at Cary First Christian Church Cemetery?

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Did you know? Linked chains and the letters FIC (Friendship, Love, and Trust) on a gravestone of an African American are likely the mark of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization not to be confused with the International Order of Odd Fellows, whose constitution included a "whites only" clause until 1971.

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Cemetery
Main Entrance

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Acknowledgements

- Sallie Jones (see below, Saving the Cemetery)
- Cary First Christian Church members who shared their family history and stories
- Ella Arrington Williams-Vinson for capturing Cary's African American history in her books, *Both Side of the Tracks, Volumes I and II*; and her son Marlon A. Williams for his permission to use material from his mother's books
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- Town of Cary for their help preserving the cemetery
- Library of Congress, Manuscript Division for photos of John Beckwith and Eliza Blake Nichols
- John Duncan for building the brochure holder

Saving the Cemetery

Sallie Jones, a member of Cary First Christian Church and a descendant of historic Cary African American families, made it her personal project in the 1980s to preserve the Cary First Christian Church Cemetery to save it from being lost. She hired archeologists to survey the cemetery and produce a map of marked and unmarked graves and she enlisted the help of the community to clean up and restore the cemetery, which had fallen into disrepair through overgrowth of vegetation and some vandalism. Desiring to honor those unknown persons buried in unmarked graves, Sallie worked with experts at the state level to identify the unknown names, spending many hours going through archived records. In a critical step, she registered the cemetery with the state, protecting it from ever being sold. Sallie Jones at age 96 was a key contributor to the development of this brochure through her knowledge and remarkable memory of the people buried here. We acknowledge with great gratitude her contributions to the brochure, the cemetery, and the people of Cary.



Turner-Evans Family Cemetery

Many African Americans from the Cary community are buried in the private Turner-Evans Family Cemetery at 800 Old Apex Road. The Turner and Evans families owned large tracts of land in that area in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Evans family owned and still owns a large amount of land to the west on Evans Road -- which is named for them -- and donated the land on which the Cary First Christian Church is currently located at 1109 Evans Road. Some members of the Turner and Evans families are buried in CFCC Cemetery and some members of the families buried at CFCC Cemetery are buried in the Turner-Evans Family Cemetery as a result of marriages between the two families.

Help Maintain and Support the Cemetery

You can help care for this sacred and historic cemetery by volunteering to help maintain the grounds or by contributing to a fund to repair grave markers and to erect a simple memorial to the persons buried here in unmarked graves. Contact admin@caryfirst.org or call 919-467-1053 to learn how.

Research sources for this brochure: friendsofpagewalker.org/CFCC-brochure-sources

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