



Welcome To Carrboro's

Historic Downtown Walking Tour!

This tour is designed to be self guided

For more information on our program offerings, visit the

Recreation and Parks Department on the web at:

www.townofcarrboro.org/rp

Brief History

Carrboro was settled circa 1882 around a railroad station of the Durham-Greensboro Southern Railway. This railroad station was constructed in a somewhat deserted area west of Chapel Hill. This led to the area being called “West Of”, Carrboro’s first unofficial name. Soon after the name was changed to “West End”, and in 1911 the name was changed to “Venable”. Two years later the town made a final name change to Carrboro in honor of Julian Shakespeare Carr, a local textile mill owner. His cotton mill was the heart of the town, providing jobs and the foundation for a growing economy. The Carr family bought the mill from Tom Lloyd who had originally built the mill and named it “Alberta”. Julian Carr also donated electricity to the community for the first 50 years since it’s incorporation. Carrboro remained a small, mill town with a steady pace of growth. In 1960 approximately 2,000 people lived in town. By the year 2000, the town’s population had grown to over 16,000 residents.



Carrboro Walking Tour

The Tour begins at 301 West Main Street

1. Carrboro Town Hall- This building houses many of Carrboro's administrative offices including the Mayor's office. Town Hall has been located here since 1959. The building was originally Carrboro's town school from 1922 to 1959.
2. Carrboro Civic Club- The Carrboro Civic Club was originally founded in 1945 under the name of the Carrboro Club for Town Improvement and Beautification. The building was originally owned by the Carrboro Woolen Mills, and was donated to the Chapel Hill Junior Service League, who in turn donated the building to the Carrboro Civic Club in 1945. Over the past 60 plus years the Carrboro Civic Club has dedicated themselves to many club projects that have enhanced the lives of Carrboro's citizens.
3. Town Commons/Carrboro Farmers' Market- This town park serves many purposes. It is the site of many of Carrboro's town celebrations such as Carrboro Day, the July 4th celebration, and the Halloween Festival. Twice weekly the Carrboro Farmers' Market convenes on this site supplying Carrboro with a wide variety of foods that are all grown within 50 miles of Carrboro.
4. Strayhorn Houses- Located at 107 and 109 Jones Ferry Road, these two houses were once owned by William and Toney Strayhorn. Toney Strayhorn was a former slave who built his house at 109 Jones Ferry Rd. shortly after the civil war. Toney's son, William, built the house standing at 107 Jones Ferry Rd. in 1915.
5. Mill Superintendent's House/ Club Nova- Located at 103 W. Main Street, this building served as the mill superintendent's house until 1938. Today the building houses Club Nova, a therapeutic clubhouse that provides psychiatric rehabilitation services.
6. Roy S. Lloyd Building/ Cliff's Meat Market- Located at 100 and 102 W. Main Street, this building was constructed by the Lloyd family around 1950 and housed the family's electrical business on the first floor while the family themselves lived on the second floor. In 1973 Cliff's Meat Market opened for business.
7. Carrboro Century Center- This building is currently home to the Carrboro Recreation & Parks Department, Carrboro Police Department, and the Cybrary, a branch of the Orange County Library. Originally this building was the Carrboro Baptist Church and was constructed in the 1920's. In 1997 the Town of Carrboro bought the building and in 2000 it opened as the Century Center.
8. East Main Street- This stretch of Main St. was Carrboro's original business district. Once wooden buildings, a fire destroyed the buildings, and the brick buildings that you see today were constructed in the 1920's. These buildings were once home to such businesses as the Melba Movie Theater, Lloyd-Ray Hardware Store and Merritt Drug Store.
9. 106 E. Main Street- Currently the Bank of America, this building was the first commercial brick building built in Carrboro. The building was constructed around 1924. The building was originally the R.H. Marks Dry Goods Store.
10. Libba Cotten Memorial Bike Path- This bike path that connects Carrboro and Chapel Hill is named after one of Carrboro's most famous citizens. Libba Cotten gained fame from her song "Freight Train" which was recently added to the US Library of Congress. Cotten won a Grammy in 1984 for a live album she recorded. Cotton, an African-American, was born in 1895, and taught herself how to play guitar. She played in an unusual style with a left handed guitar turned upside down. Cotten wrote "Freight Train" when she was 12 years old.
11. Old Carrboro Cemetery- The land for this cemetery was donated to the town by Dr. Foy Robertson. The cemetery has been in use since the early 1910's, with the oldest marked stone being at 1915. There are several unmarked stones that may date back further. This is Carrboro's oldest cemetery.
12. Cat's Cradle- This famed local music venue has been host to some of music's most famous artists. Acts such as REM, Pearl Jam, and Nirvana have graced the stage of one of Carrboro's most famous attractions.
13. Carrboro Arts Center- A community gathering place that nurtures creativity and community through art, education, performance, and exhibition. The Arts Center is a place where local artists can show off many of their newest creations, and allows visitors a deeper understanding of Carrboro.
14. Main Street Gallery- Currently an art gallery featuring antique pottery, antique and modern art, and a monthly art display. Many people do not know that this was home to the Hollywood Theatre, the famed black only theater of the mid 1940's and 50's. The Hollywood featured Friday, Saturday, and Sunday shows with a .10 admission.
15. Lloyd Gristmill- The original building on this site was erected in the 1880's, but was destroyed by fire in 1916. The building was rebuilt shortly after and is still standing today. The building was originally a gristmill and cotton gin, and has been the site of many businesses since.
16. Carrboro Railroad Station- This railroad station was the impetus for Carrboro's creation. Originally called "West OP" because of its proximity to Chapel Hill, settlements around the railroad station eventually led to the formation of Carrboro. The station was built in 1913. It is the current home of the Southern Rail restaurant.
17. The Flatiron Building- This unique triangular building was modeled after the famous "Flatiron Building" in New York City. It was originally built in the 1920's and has housed many businesses, and was once home to the US Post Office.
18. Weaver Street Market- Known as "Carrboro's Front Yard", Weaver St. Market is a community cooperative of locally grown organic produce and products. The lawn in front of the market is a gathering place for citizens, and hosts many events from craft fairs to concerts.
19. Carr Mill Mall- Originally called Alberta Cotton Mill, this building was built by Thomas Lloyd in 1898. This brought jobs and people to the area and spurred the growth of Carrboro. The mill was bought by Julian Carr, Carrboro's namesake, in 1909. By the 1970's the building was vacant and slated for demolition, but was saved by the local citizens as a historical landmark. After an \$8.5 million renovation, the building became Carr Mill Mall, home to many retail stores, offices, and restaurants.
20. Fitch Lumber Company- This business was founded in 1898 and opened in Carrboro in 1923. The railroad and the mill allowed Fitch Lumber to thrive and is one of Carrboro's original and longest lasting businesses.
21. Poplar Avenue/Lindsey Street/Weaver Street- These streets encompass much of Carrboro's original residential district. These typical mill houses are good examples of the architectural style of the 1920s and 1930s.