

# The Cary Clarion

Cary, North Carolina

16-19 October 2016

## Mayberry Makeover



Visiting in Cary with Emily's sister Allison Connors, center, Rod and Betty Moak, their parents who came up from Charlotte, and my son Gordon.



## Mayberry Makeover

Downtown Cary, North Carolina, where Emily, Gordon and I arrived by train after the Virginia wedding, is working to revive its inner Mayberry.

The porches where Andy and Barney would have sat to dream away a Sunday afternoon after giving Otis a ride home in the squad car from his Saturday night drunk are being restored and repainted.

The downtown intersections are being repaved with new brick, and the sidewalks and shops around Chatham and Academy streets are getting spiffed up.

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**Grandparents and grandson going for ice cream at Ashworth's Drug Store on the corner of West Chatham and Academy.**

A large, ornate, three-story house with a wrap-around porch, surrounded by trees and landscaping. The house has light-colored siding and a dark roof. The porch is white with decorative columns and railings. There are several windows with shutters and a door with a small sign above it. The house is surrounded by lush greenery and trees, some with yellowing leaves. A flag is flying on a pole to the right of the house. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

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But Otis' ride home to the country is a lot longer than it was in the 1960s when I first visited Cary, then a town of 6,000, to watch my Hamlet High play Little Washington in a state football playoff game on a frozen November field.

There are 160,000 people in Cary today – among them Emily's sister Allison and her family – a town that sprawls over 50 square miles in two counties. In many ways it is a forest-covered version of Silicon Valley, a tech burb fueled by universities posted around its borders in a triangle 40 miles across on its longest side.

The little downtown businesses are charming. But they  
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**The Guess-White-Ogle House on Academy Street was originally built in the 1830s and its architectural details changed over the years with whatever style the owner preferred until landing on the current Queen Anne style around 1870. It is now protected as a town landmark.**



# Mayberry Makeover

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pack nowhere near the economic wallop as the brick shopping malls with French bistros and barbecue joints in neighborhoods with Scottish names that are the real meeting and doing places for residents.

Preserving Cary's past is a noble enterprise even if the old buildings with shiny paint and Restoration Hardware touches are a bit more dressed up than they were in the days when they were real houses and stores.

In its day, Cary's downtown was the center of something small. Today it is on the edge of something much bigger that has no single center.

**Elizabeth's Home & Garden on West Chatham Street.**



**The Carolinian** pauses in Cary on its daily northbound run from Charlotte to New York. We took the southbound train from Richmond, Va., to Cary to visit with Emily's parents and sister.