

A Timeline of Events in Clayton Area History

1701

-English surveyor John Lawson came down Neuse River on his journey from Charleston, S.C., to piedmont and eastern N.C.

1705

-Craven County created, encompassing territory west of New Bern (all the way to the Pacific Ocean!).

1711

-The Tuscaroras, an Iroquoian-speaking people who inhabited eastern North Carolina for hundreds of years, were defeated by European settlers and their Native American allies. Except for a remnant along the Roanoke River, the Tuscaroras were forced to leave the colony, eventually settling near Buffalo, New York.

1746

-Johnston County created from Craven, with courthouse located near present Goldsboro.

1759

Johnston County Courthouse was relocated to Hinton's Quarter, near present day US Hwy 70 and Hwy 42 E due to the creation of Dobbs County from a portion of Johnston County.

-John Tarver established a ferry across the Neuse River on the road from - Johnston Courthouse to the Tar River. Merchant Nathaniel Cary of Orange County acquired surrounding land and opened a store near the courthouse.

1768

-Regulator uprising at Johnston Courthouse, Hinton's Quarter, led by John O'Neal. By 1771 John O'Neal apparently fled the colony with a price on his head.

1771

-N.C. Governor William Tryon reviewed militia at Johnston Courthouse en route to the Battle of Alamance to quell the Regulator uprising.

-County seat moved from Hinton's Quarter to Smithfield with the creation of Wake County from northern Johnston County.

1778



-Etheldred Gregory acquired 820 acres, including former courthouse, where he operated a tavern.

1809

-Gregory's Ordinary (Tavern) burned; courthouse property sold to Louis Wilburn.

1811

-Local Baptists organized at Liberty Meeting House on John McCullers plantation.



1845



-Post office established at Gulley's Store, with Needham G. Gulley first postmaster.

Needham G. Gulley

1848

-North Carolina Railroad chartered to construct rail line between Goldsboro and Charlotte.

1850

-Area in southeast Clayton became known as the village of Roxborough.
-A private school, known as the Roxborough School, was established there by H. L. Winton of New Jersey.

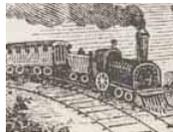
1854

-North Carolina Railroad completed to the area and a depot, Stallings Station, was located near O'Neil and Front Streets.

1855

-First stretch of N.C. Railroad opened from Goldsboro to Durham.
-A new school, Clayton Institute, opened with William B. Jones as principal.

1856



-NC Railroad completed to Charlotte, soon to be recognized as North Carolina's "fertile crescent."

-Post office was relocated closer to "Stallings Station" and the name was changed to Clayton, possibly in honor of U.S. Senator John M. Clayton.

-Granite Lodge #191, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, organized in Clayton.



W. W. Cox



W. W. Cox home, c. 1856-1873

-Sarah Stallings divided her property, known as Stallings Station, into lots along railroad. First lot purchasers were merchants Sanders P. Cox, son Wiley Wooten Cox, and James A. Smith.

1859

-Bill introduced in NC House of Commons (but, for unknown reason, not passed) to incorporate the Town of Clayton.
-Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, established Clayton (later Horne Memorial) Methodist Church.



Clayton Methodist Church

1861

-Infantry unit known as Clayton Yellow Jackets was formed to serve in the Confederate Army. The unit became Company C, 24th North Carolina Regiment.

1865

-Confederate and Union soldiers passed through Clayton shortly before the end of the Civil War. According to local lore, US Major General Sherman and his headquarters staff camped near the Jos. M Smith place. (Smith-Durham – Ellington-Compton House)

-A “brisk skirmish” was fought at the eastern edge of town on April 12. That evening Commissioners were sent by Governor Zebulon B. Vance to request a meeting with Sherman to negotiate the preservation of Raleigh. (A Civil War Trails marker is located on the corner of O’Neil and Second Street.)



Smith-Durham-
Ellington-Compton
House

-Capt. A. M. Noble, war refugee from New Bern, established mercantile firm in Clayton.

1867

-Local farmer and Confederate veteran Ashley Horne bought Noble’s stock of goods and began to build a financial empire as a merchant, farmer, banker, and industrialist.

1868

-Clayton Township created under the Reconstruction legislature’s reorganized county government structure.

1869

-Town of Clayton incorporated by N.C. General Assembly.

-W. H. McCullers established a general merchandising business on First Street facing the railroad.



McCullers Dry Goods,
Clayton's first brick store

1870

- Black Baptists organized a church which later became
- First Missionary Baptist Church on Stallings Street.



c. 1872

- Good Templar lodge chartered to promote temperance among Clayton citizens.

1880

Population – 352.

1881

- J. G. Barbour and Sons moved their rural general merchandising business from the Baptist Center vicinity to the corner of Main and Lombard Streets facing the Horne store.
- Clayton City Cemetery was established on Stallings St.

1883

- John R. Wedding and N. R. Richardson began publishing a newspaper, the *Clayton Bud*, which ran until about 1887.

1884

- Johnston Liberty Baptist Church relocated from the McCullers property and built a new church on Whitaker Street, adopting the name Clayton (later First) Baptist Church in 1889. The 1884 building was later used by Mt. Vernon Christian Church.



1889

- Quinton C. Mial and wife Lillie began a school for blacks, later renamed William M. Cooper High School.



Clayton School for Negroes, corner of
Lombard and Stallings Streets,
photographed in 1930s.

1890

Population – 478.

- The Aug. 9 issue of the *Smithfield Herald* carried an article stating, "Clayton is a blessed little place and boasts of being the wealthiest town of its size in the United States." This is the earliest known reference to this distinction.

1894



-At the urging of General Julian S. Carr of Durham, Ashley Horne and wife Rena began work on their mansion next to the Horne store at Main and Lombard Streets. It was completed in 1897 and demolished in 1970 for a shopping center which failed to materialize.

1898

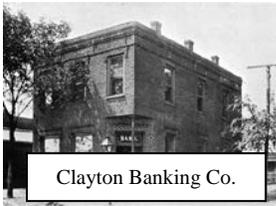
-Local blacks established Mount Vernon Christian Church.

1899



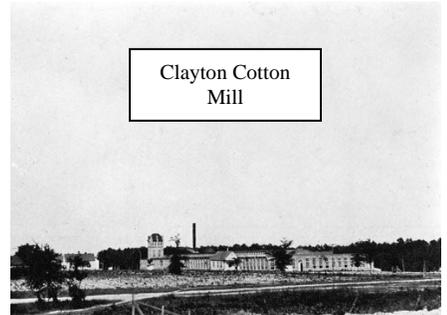
-Dispensary law passed for Clayton, allowing town officials to close all barrooms and operate a town liquor dispensary. Proceeds benefited local schools.

City Market, c. 1910,
former Clayton Dispensary



Clayton Banking Co.

-Town's first bank established, with Ashley Horne as president and C. M. Thomas, cashier.



Clayton Cotton Mill

1900

Population – 754.

-Clayton Cotton Mills opened, with Ashley Horne as president. The mill closed in 1976.

1901

-Clayton School Company chartered to oversee construction of a new high school and dormitory for boarding students at Second and Fayetteville Streets.

1903

-First sewage system installed.

-Knights of Pythias organized a lodge in Clayton.

-Everett's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church organized.



Everett's Chapel Church



Clayton Oil Mill

-A. J. Barbour built Clayton Cotton Oil Mill.

1905

-Clayton Dispensary closed following a special town election.

1907



Liberty Cotton Mill

-Liberty Cotton Mill established, opening the following year with A. J. Barbour as president.

-Clayton Telephone Co. chartered, with young boys running the switchboard in the Horne store.

-Ashley Horne announced his candidacy for Governor of North Carolina.

1908

-Clayton Building and Loan Association organized, with Charles W. Horne as president.

-Ashley Horne defeated in gubernatorial primary election.

-Rom H. Gower began developing West Clayton as a “suburb” of Clayton.

1909

-E. R. MacBryde began publishing a short-lived newspaper, *The Clayton Enterprise*.

-A short-lived tobacco market opened with two warehouses, the Star and the Liberty.



Star Tobacco Warehouse, near later site of Town Hall, on opening day in 1909.

-John T. Talton published his first of three issues of the *Illustrated Handbook of Clayton*.

-Laura Elizabeth “Bettie” Lee (Mrs. Jesse M.) Battle published *Forget-Me-Nots of the Civil War*, an account of her childhood in Clayton during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

1910

-Population - 1,441, making Clayton largest town in Johnston County.
St. Augustine AME Church organized.



Battle family, c. 1913

-Mr. and Mrs. Jesse M. Battle of St. Louis, Missouri, built a 6,000 square foot winter home, “Roxboro Hall,” organized a Catholic church, and opened the town’s first movie theater in a small building at the corner of O’Neil and First Streets. Lila Cable played the piano, and Mr. Battle played the violin during the silent movies.



Roxboro Hall, later home of Mrs.
Battle's nephew, Charles W. Horne

1911

- Bonds approved for waterworks, sewerage, and electric lights.
- The Grand Lodge of North Carolina, Knights of Pythias, opened an orphanage on a 177-acre tract of land near Clayton acquired in part by purchase and in part by donation from brothers A. J. and D. W. Barbour.
- Ashley Horne contributed \$10,000 to the State of North Carolina to erect a monument to the Women of the Confederacy.
- W. S. Penn began publishing the town's third newspaper, *The Clayton News*.
- State leaders announced plans to run a Central Highway through Clayton.

1912

- Number of town commissioners increased to 5.
- New waterworks and sewerage systems installed.



Halcyon Club members at 50th
anniversary in 1962.

- Horne Memorial Methodist Church built new edifice, featuring windows made by Louis C. Tiffany Studios, New York, which were installed in 1916.
- Halcyon Club organized.

1913

- Electric lights were turned on for the first time.

1915



- Clayton High School's new brick school building was completed on the corner of Fayetteville and Second Streets.

1916

- Clayton High School baseball team won state championship.

1917

- Clayton Lodge #706, Woodmen of the World, organized.

1918

- 20th Century Mother's Club organized (renamed Clayton Woman's Club in 1920).
- Farmer's Bank opened, with J. Arch Vinson, president, and John M. Turley, cashier.

-Maplewood Cemetery opened.

1919

-Leonard Moore Post #71, American Legion organized.

1920

Population - 1,423.

-Clayton (later North Clayton) Christian Church organized.



1922 Championship Team

1922

-Clayton High School baseball team won second state championship.

1924

-New brick building constructed for Clayton Negro School, funded by county tax revenue, private donations, and a matching gift from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Highway 10 (old Central Highway) was built through Clayton.

1925-1926

-Main Street (Route 10) was paved with concrete between Clayton and Garner and became Highway 70 the following year.

-Rotary Club of Clayton organized.

1926

-Elementary School building completed for white children, including 18 classrooms, library, and 1100-seat auditorium.

-Clayton High School baseball team won third state championship.



1927

-Town Hall, located on the corner of Barbour and Second Streets, was built to house municipal offices, police department, and volunteer fire department. Plans were also included for a library.

-Charles W. Horne and Ashley Horne and Son forced into bankruptcy.

-N.C. Forest Service established a nursery on a 9-acre site west of Clayton. Within a decade over 3 million tree seedlings a year were provided to landowners across the state for reforestation. The federal Civilian Conservation Corps maintained a labor camp on the property during the Depression years.

1928

-Junior Woman's Club organized.

1930

Population - 1,533.

- First Citizens Bank acquired Bank of Clayton.
- Clayton Church of God organized.

1931

- Clayton's first public library for whites opened in municipal building, with salary of librarian paid by Woman's Club.
- Clayton Pentecostal Holiness Church organized.

1932

- Brothers J. Dwight and Swade E. Barbour acquired Liberty Cotton Mill and changed name to Bartex.

1933

- Native son William E. Dodd was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Germany by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He was recalled in 1937 after clashing with Nazi and embassy officials.

1934-1935

- Highway 42 paved from Clayton to Fuquay Springs and from Clayton to Wilson.

1935

- Two stoplights were placed downtown, one at the intersection of Main and Lombard Streets and another at Main and O'Neil Streets.

1936

- Cooper High School expanded with 6 new classrooms.

1940

Population - 1,711.

- Clayton Negro School annex completed, including library, home economics and science departments, and 2 classrooms. At the dedication the school was renamed William Mason Cooper High School in honor of a leading black educator who was former principal at Johnston County Training School.

1941

- Town began paying salary of librarian.



Funeral of Bud Satterfield, one of four teenagers killed in auto-train collision.

- An automobile-train collision in Benson claimed the lives of four Clayton teen-agers attending a basketball game. This tragedy ended interscholastic basketball at Clayton High School for several years.

1944

- Parmi-Nous Club organized.

1945

-Community Club organized by local black citizens.

1946

-Debonnaire Club organized.

-Lombardy Park residential area opened.

1947



-Black citizens built a community building which became the first public library for their race in Johnston County, with Carrie Siler, librarian.

-Local blacks formed Star of Bethlehem Masonic Lodge #111 and Goodwill Lodge #380, Knights of Pythias.

1948

-Street-paving completed in downtown area.

-A Youth Center was built as a joint project of the Woman's Club and the Rotary Club.

-Norwich Knitting Company opened new plant in Clayton.

1950

Population - 2,229.

1951

-Road to Archer Lodge paved.

-Clayton Merchants Association organized, later to become the Chamber of Commerce. The CMA instituted the popular Cotton Festival that same year.



Cotton Festival parade float, 1952

1952

-Clayton High School won the Six-man Football State Championship.

1953

-Municipal Recorder's Court established.

-Central Crops Research Station located on 484-acre tract west of Clayton.

-Highway 70 was rerouted to bypass Clayton's downtown commercial district and hard-surfaced.

1954

-Calanthe Club organized.

1955-56

-Clayton High School industrial arts building, football field, and gymnasium completed on site where entire school would be relocated in 1963. From the 1930s to that time



Hardee Subdivision

the former auditorium of the 1915 school building was used as a gymnasium.
-Heavner Heights and Hardee residential areas opened.

1956



-New high school building completed at Cooper High School.

-Union Carbide Chemicals Corporation located a research farm on a 280-acre tract east of town.

1957

-Hocutt Memorial Baptist Church organized.

1959

-Clayton Ministerial Association organized.



-Community Improvement Council formed.

Community Improvement Council
Rummage Market, 1963

1960

Population - 3,302.

-Clayton Civitan Club organized.

1962

-Home Demonstration Club organized.

1963

-Rescue and civil defense squad established.



First Rescue Squad



-Cooper High School men's basketball team won state championship.

-Clayton High School's new facility was dedicated.

1964

-4H Club organized.

-Town's post office moved from its Main Street location to its new 4,000 square foot building on the corner of Barbour and Second Streets.

1965

-Token racial integration of schools begun under a choice plan.

-Clayton Advent Christian Church organized.

-Lyles Memorial Baptist Church organized.

1967

-Church of God of Prophecy organized.

-New four-lane section of Highway 70 opened.

-Clayton Development Corporation formed.

-Senior Citizens Club organized.

-Clayton Junior Civic Club organized.

1968

-Last session of Clayton Recorder's Court held after state legislature abolished Recorder's Courts and established District Courts.

-Fellowship Baptist Church organized.

-Las Amigos Club organized.

-Happy Senior Citizens Club organized.

1969

-Town of Clayton celebrated the 100th anniversary of its incorporation.

-Glenwood Manufacturing Co. opened a ladies' lingerie plant in West Clayton.

-Schools were fully integrated, with Cooper school converted to a Junior High campus.

-Clayton Primary School opened.

-Pythian Home closed, having provided a home for hundreds of orphans over a 58-year period.



Centennial drama, "First A Dream"

1970

Population - 3,103.

-State Forest Nursery was renamed in honor of longtime supervisor Phillip A. Griffiths.

1972

-Oneida Molded Plastics opened a plant west of town.

1973

-First full-time paid fire chief appointed.

1974

-Cutter Laboratories, a pharmaceutical plant, opened east of Clayton



1976

-Natvar Corporation opened a medical products plant east of town.

-Clemmons State Forest, a public park near the State Nursery, opened to the public. It was named for longtime Forest Service employee Moody Clemmons.

-Clayton Spinning Company (originally Clayton Cotton Mills) closed after 76 years in operation.

-Five Clayton High School students were killed in an automobile accident, reminiscent of the 1941 tragedy.

-Clayton High School men's basketball team won state championship.

1977

-Hardee's opened on the corner of Robertson and US HWY 70.

1978

-Data General Corporation, based in Westboro, MA, opened a computer assembly plant on Highway 42 east of Clayton.

-Clayton Senior Center on the corner of Fayetteville and Front Street opens.

1980

Population - 4,091.

-Bartex Mill, owned by New York-based Norwich Mills since 1946 and merged with Champion Products in 1971, converted Clayton facility to a retail distribution center.

1981

-Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library opened at its new location on property donated by Lucille Ellington Hocutt.

1988

-Highway I-40 completed from Raleigh to Benson, fostering explosive residential and commercial growth in and around Clayton.

1989

-Clayton High School football team won the State 2-A Championship Title.

1990

Population - 4,756.

1991

-Caterpillar, manufacturer of heavy earth-moving equipment, began operation.

1993

-Clayton Middle School opened.

1995

-Bayer Corporation took over the Miles-Cutter plant east of Clayton.

1996

-Novo Nordisk, a Danish company, began making insulin products in the Powhatan community near Clayton.



Novo Nordisk plant

1997

-East Clayton Elementary School opened.

2000

Population - 6,973.

2001

-WakeMed's Medical Park of Clayton opened.

-The Clayton Center, the renovated former Clayton High School, had its Grand Opening on New Year's Eve 2001.

2002

-Johnston Memorial Hospital and Duke University Health Systems opened The Summit, a medical office complex.

-Town Hall relocated to the newly renovated Clayton Center.

2004

-Clayton Area Rescue opens new building on Robertson Street.

-Clayton High School celebrates its 100th anniversary.

2005

-Talecris, a corporation based in Research Triangle Park, N.C., began making blood plasma at the former Miles-Cutter/Bayer site.

-Clayton Fire Department opens its new facility on the corner of Robertson and Horne Street.

2008

- Clayton received its first Civil War Trails Marker, "Flag of Truce," located near the corner of O'Neil and Second Street on the Town Square. Research for the marker was compiled by the Clayton Historical Association.
- Clayton Bypass completed in June.
- US 70 Clayton Bypass completed.
- Clayton became part of the state's Main Street Program.
- "Images of America: Clayton," a book showcasing photographs of Clayton and its history, is published by Clayton Historian Pamela Lipscomb Baumgartner and K. Todd Johnson.

2009

- Ranked tenth best town in the nation for affordability and quality of schools by *BusinessWeek Magazine*.
- Johnston Medical Center-Clayton opened.
- "Clayton Patchwork" painted by artist Dorothy Demboski, Clayton's first public art project, was unveiled. The mural of town scenes is located in the Clayton Center.

2010

Population - 16,116.

- Clayton Community Center, a 30,000 square feet recreation facility, located on Amelia Church Road, opened.
- Clayton received approval by the National Park Service of its historic district listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- "True Colors," painted by artist Jim Brown, Clayton's second public art mural, was unveiled at the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library. This mural shows historic scenes and people of Clayton community.

2011

- Clayton Law Enforcement Center, located on Barbour and Second Street opens.
- Sam's Branch Greenway, a 1 ¼ mile trail to the Neuse River, opens to the public.
- Horne Square, a public space on Main Street, was dedicated.

2012

- East Clayton Community Dog Parks on Glen Laurel Road opens.

2013

- East Clayton Community Park, located on Glen Laurel Road, opens.
- Hwy 42 East widening project began.
- Front Street extension began.