

# HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

## Consolidation of Winston and Salem

W. First Street between N. Main & N. Marshall Street

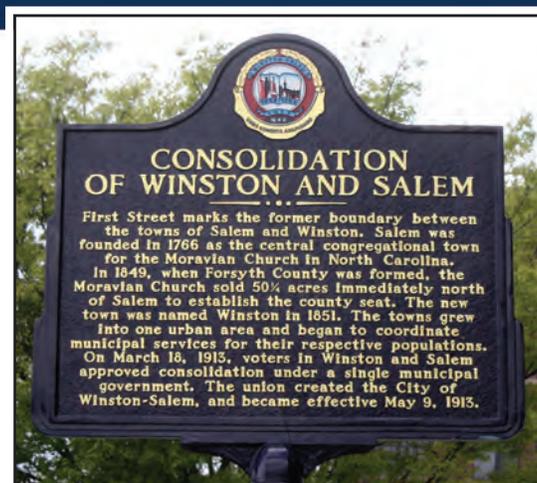
The City of Winston-Salem was founded in 1913 after residents of both Salem and Winston voted to consolidate the two towns. Now reaching 100 years of age, Winston-Salem was once the largest city in North Carolina and remains one of the state's largest cities today.

Despite growing next to one another, Salem and Winston followed different paths to the 1913 consolidation. Salem, the older of the two towns, was founded in 1766 from a tract of land settled by the Moravians to be their central congregational town. The name Salem ("Peace") was chosen by the Moravians' patron Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf because he wanted the place to be characterized by an environment of tranquility.



Salem was always planned to be self-sustaining, and additionally, over the years an interest in education typified the town, with the first schools opening in 1772. Salem grew as a town of trade, industry, craft, finance and agriculture.

When Forsyth County was created from a part of Stokes County in 1849, a new location for its courthouse was chosen just north of Salem. Incorporated in 1851, the town of Winston grew from a little more than 50 acres bought from the Salem Moravians. Its center, the courthouse, stood



on the highest point along the main street, which continued northward from Salem. As settlers moved to the new county seat, the population of Winston exploded.

Winston's growth soon caused it to overshadow Salem in many ways, despite the latter's longer period of existence. Whereas Salem had grown slowly into a self-sufficient community supporting various industries and trades, Winston became more prominent in the realm of finance and its largest claims to fame were the tobacco and textile industries.

By 1913, the two towns had become practically inseparable. In fact, many travelers described the towns as though they were one, and a number of services were provided to each in collaboration with the other. When Salem and Winston were consolidated, the new city experienced a period of intense growth and prosperity, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Present-day First Street marks the former boundary between Salem and Winston. The vestiges of Salem remain in Old Salem, just south of Downtown. Many of the original structures remain, and the community is a popular destination for residents and visitors alike.



This information is also available  
at the Forsyth County  
Historic Resources Commission's web site:  
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>