

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WINSTON-SALEM

1766 - The town of Salem was founded by Moravian settlers. These hard-working, community minded people placed their religious beliefs above all else. Both old-fashioned and forward-thinking, they would open America's first women's college, Salem College, in 1772, create one of the first central-water systems in the country, and compose the nation's first piece of classical music. Today Salem is immortalized in Old Salem, a historic village that reflects the simple lifestyle of these first settlers. (www.oldsalem.org)



1874 - 24-year old Richard Joshua Reynolds rode into town on horseback in search of a suitable location to build his tobacco factory. After a sluggish start, the tiny operation would explode, selling a quarter of the country's chewing tobacco by the turn of the century. (www.rjrt.com/history) Visit the home he built with his wife in 1917, tour the gardens, and view their collection of American art at Reynolda House and Gardens. (www.reynoldahouse.org)



1900-1901 - When R. J. Reynolds bought the tobacco company of John and Pleasant Hanes, they reinvested the proceeds of their sale into textile businesses. John's business made men's socks; Pleasant's company produced knitted underwear. These two companies merged in 1960 to become Hanes Corp; were bought out in 1979 by Sara Lee Corp.; and are now known as Hanesbrands Inc. (www.hansebrands.com)

1913 - The towns of Winston and Salem were joined. By 1920 it was North Carolina's largest city. (www.ci.winston-salem.nc.us)

1923 - The first patients were admitted to Baptist Hospital, built with money from the NC Baptist State Convention. In 1942 Bowman Gray School of Medicine opened. Today the two are united as the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center one of the nation's premier medical schools and top ranked hospitals. WFUBMC is the city's largest employer with approximately 13,000 employees. (www.wfubmc.edu)



1929 - The Reynolds Building, a prototype for New York's Empire State Building, was completed. At the time, it was the tallest building (21 stories and 341 feet) south of Baltimore.



1937 - Vernon Rudolph arrived in Winston-Salem with a secret recipe he bought from a French pastry chef in Kentucky. He opened up a shop in Old Salem with the intention of establishing a wholesale operation. But soon the aroma of his sweet, fluffy treat had the locals dropping by. Today we know this treat as a Krispy Kreme glazed doughnut and it is now sold in 600 locations in 21 countries. Be sure to try one when it is piping hot! (www.krispykreme.com)

1956 - Founded in 1834, Wake Forest College (north of Raleigh, NC) trained Baptist Ministers. Later it added a law school and medical school. In 1941 Winston-Salem officials offered Wake Forest an incentive to move the medical school (see 1929 above) and five years later Winston-Salem officials again approached the school with an offer to move the entire college. Ground was broken in 1951 to build the new campus and the first classes were held in 1956. Today Wake Forest University is ranked as one of the nation's top colleges. (www.wfu.edu)

1983 - The Stevens Center, a neoclassical theater originally opened in 1929 as a silent movie theater, was restored and reopened. It is the primary performance space for the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. UNCOSA, founded in 1963, was the first public arts conservatory in the nation and continues to offer professional caliber performances in drama, dance, and music. (www.uncsa.edu) UNCOSA is just one of many reasons the city of Winston-Salem calls itself the City of the Arts. Winston-Salem is also home to the state's oldest symphony, the nation's first arts council, the River Run International Film Festival, and the National Black Theater Festival.



(www.visitwinstonsalem.com/experiences/exp_arts)