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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

	INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW T TYPE ALL ENTRIES - (			S
NAME				
HISTORIC T	The Page-Walker Hotel			
AND/OR COMMON				
A.	e Walker Hotel			
LOCATION				
STREET & NUMBER	119 Ambassador Stre	eet	NOT FOR BURLICATION	
CITY, TOWN		en e	NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	RICT
Cary		VICINITY OF	4th	
STATE North Carolina	L	37	соинту Wake	CODE 183
CLASSIFIC	ATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENT USE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	-WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X_PRIVATE RESIDEN
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESSBEING CONSIDERED	X-YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES UNRESTRICTEDNO	INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTATION
	Robert L. Strother			
STREET & NUMBER	119 Ambassador Stree	; et	CYATE	
STREET & NUMBER		,	STATE	27511
STREET & NUMBER CITY, TOWN Cary		VICINITY OF	STATE North Carolina	27511
STREET & NUMBER  CITY. TOWN  CARY  LOCATION  COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS,E  STREET & NUMBER	OF LEGAL DESCR	VICINITY OF IPTION		27511
STREET & NUMBER  CITY, TOWN  CARY  LOCATION  COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, E  STREET & NUMBER  Fayettevi CITY, TOWN	OF LEGAL DESCR  Wake County Co	VICINITY OF IPTION	North Carolina	27511
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CONDITION

**CHECK ONE** 

**CHECK ONE** 

\_\_EXCELLENT

\_\_DETERIORATED

X\_UNALTERED \_\_ALTERED

X\_ORIGINAL SITE

\_\_GOOD \_XFAIR

\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_RUINS

\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Page-Walker Hotel is a fine, yet simple example of the Second Empire style in North Carolina. Built about 1868 to accommodate railroad passengers, it is located adjacent to the Southern and Seaboard tracks and occupies a commanding position in downtown Cary. Although it is a surprisingly sophisticated design for a town of Cary's population (316 people according to the 1880 Federal Census), the hotel does contain many interesting deviations from the strict symmetricality often found in this style. The form and character of the building remain intact despite some alterations to the porch and door and window openings.

The two-and-one-half story, six bay rectangular building is located on approximate 3½ acres of land. It is constructed entirely of handmade red brick (4:1 common bond) with lime mortar joints, and is built directly upon the ground. The minimal crawl space is reached through trap doors in the first floor. The entirety of the building is embellished by Italianate wooden detailing.

The steep straight-sided mansard roof is enlivened by ten pedimented six-over-six dormer windows set within decoratively sawn surrounds. The roofline is penetrated by two exterior end chimneys on the east and west facades, and two centrally-located interior end chimneys at the south and north facades. The chimney stacks extend well above the ridge line and are lent a medieval flavor by the decorative recessed panels and corbelled chimney caps. Simple wooden moldings emphasize the curb and cornice line of the roof, while a similar string course encircles the building on the second story. Curvilinear eave brackets support the overhanging roof, which is sheathed in asbestos shingles.

The principal (southern) facade is dominated by six full-size wooden posts, which support a balcony at the attic level. The simple balusters with delicate sawnwork ornamentation enliven the entrance. These posts originally ended at the second floor and supported a gallery; however they were lengthened from twelve to twenty-four feet in renovations undertaken in the 1940s. During this period, the attic balcony was added, the second floor balcony was made narrower, and the wooden entry porch was covered in concrete. The second story floor joists originally extended beneath the balcony; however, these joists were cut flush to the exterior wall, and decorative non-supporting brackets were added. Six large bell-shaped lamps were also hung from the attic balcony at this time.

Two asymmetrically-placed doors lead to the interior; however, it is not known whether the western-most door is original, as the window immediately to the right was also a door until renovations undertaken in the early 1970s. Two pairs of French lead to the second floor balcony, while the attic balcony must be reached through windows. All fenestration original to the structure is six-over-six sash, set within complex eight part moldings and surmounted by a flat brick arch. The three segmentally arched windows on the north facade are the only exception to this.

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The two-bay east and west facades are nearly identical, excepting the doorway with overdoor (1940s addition), on the east facade which is the main entrance today.

The north (back) elevation reveals the most changes and also exhibits marked asymmetry in the original placement of the two attic dormers, and the second floor windows, three (out of four) of which are arched. Other changes include: central first floor windows are both wider and set within simpler architraves than other typical windows, indicating they were probably doors at one time. In addition, the eastern doorway originally led to a shed kitchen said to be approximately 12' x 15'. In ruins by the 1940s, it was finally completely dismantled. Other forties renovations were the addition of a metal six-over-six casement window, in what became the kitchen on the eastern end of the facade, the overdoor installed over the rear kitchen entry, and the construction of a Second Empire Revival building to accomodate a boiler room, thus replacing the original "thimble" heating system. (Thimble heat is a system in which heat is created by wood stoves and transmitted through ducts in the chimney stack, with smoke escaping through chimney flues which are indistinguishable from traditional chimney stacks in this building.) Sheathed in shiplap and capped with a mansard roof and dormers, it is a whimsical camouflage. A new chimney stack was built adjacent to the original to transmit the coal heat. The 1970s renovations included very sympathetically designed French doors leading to a newly-constructed brick patio. Iron anchor beams are also visible on this facade.

The interior of the hotel has been at various times a hotel, apartment/boarding house and single-family dwelling, and has naturally been remodeled and modernized through the years. Yet the original hotel "plan" is still easily perceived. The original first floor contained a living room or lounge, a large dining room, spacious entrance hall, and the Walkers' sitting room, later converted to a kitchen. (Original owners, the Pages, lived next door, and probably would have used this room for another (forgotten) purpose.) As Cary was a temperance community there were no drinking facilities available. Two narrow, single flight stairways led to the second floor which contained six bedrooms. Interestingly, until the 1940s renovations, there was a partition wall dividing this floor in half, each side reached by a separate stairway. The attic floor had four rooms, which could only be reached by the western stairs, as the eastern stairway ended at the second floor. Today, the first floor is substantially unchanged in form and usage, while the most notable change on the second and attic floors is the addition of plumbing.

The interior is very simple, and little elaborate detailing remains if indeed it ever existed. The 12" baseboards are original, as are the window and door surrounds, and many of the doors themselves. Window reveals are 18" thick reflecting the solid brick construction and plaster walls. 5" pine flooring covers the main floor, except the kitchen which has recently been bricked. The stairways are quite utilitarian, the

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east being of boxed construction, and the west possessing "restored" newel post and balusters. The four original fireplaces remain, three of which have identical Italianate wooden mantels typical of houses built from about 1850-1875. The heavy curved mantel shelf with arched backboard, rests upon a simple frieze board with ogee arch, which is supported by chamfered Doric pilasters surrounding a rectangular plaster and brick hearth, forming a simple yet dignified composition. Some of the hotel's partition walls have been cut into or removed to accommodate a family, however with the piercing whistle of the train, it is remarkably easy to be transported into the past again.

The property also includes the original well (Pump: Myers #2927, Patent date January 18, 1912, F. E. Myers and Brothers Co., #4211 (4311?), a barn (At least dating from 1909 as mentioned in the Walker will of this date: "Second. I give and devise to my wife Nancey H. Walker, the hotel, barn lot, and garden. . . ."), a coop, warehouse, and shelter for farm equipment (c. 1950), reflecting the time when the hotel grew some of its own food. The property is surrounded by some 500 feet of hedge planted in the late 1940s, and is dotted by large elm trees. A pressed brick walkway (similar to brick sidewalk in Raleigh) leads to the eastern entry door from the parking area, documenting the time when the hotel was no longer dependent upon the railroad.

SPECIFIC DAT	ES Ca. 1868	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT (said to be) Al	lison Francis Page
		INVENTION		
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	X_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
X_1800-1899	<u>X</u> _COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	X_TRANSPORTATION
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
PERIOD	AF	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Walker Hotel, ca. 1868, was constructed by Allison Francis Page, early founder of Cary, leader in the North Carolina lumber and rail industry, and father of Walter Hines Page, the former U. S. ambassador to Great Britain. Built to serve rail passengers on the North Carolina Railroad (today the Southern R & R) and Chatham Railroad (today the Seaboard R & R), the Walker Hotel is significant today as a reminder of the importance of the rail industry in Cary's early development and as a survivor of the prevalent traveling customs in the late nineteenth century.

Architecturally, it is a handsome, remarkably unaltered building in the Second Empire style, a rarity in small-town North Carolina, as this style was commonly reserved for prestigious homes and public structures. The town of Cary has rapidly suburbanized since the mid-1960s, and has become a small-town core, surrounded by modern housing developments. Although many houses constructed within the Victorian period remain, the Walker Hotel is architecturally the most prominent reminder of the original one-mile square township of Cary.

#### Criteria Assessment:

- A. Associated with the development of Cary as a railroad-oriented town; associated with the rail industry in North Carolina, an extremely important factor in the state's economic and industrial development. The railroads and their accompanying hotels made travel possible for vacationers, salesmen and commuters. Small towns such as Cary were dependent upon the railroad for their very existence. Thus of local significance to Cary.
- B. The only building remaining in Cary today that is associated with the Page family.

  A. F. Page founded Cary, was its first mayor, developed the lumber industry in Cary and later Moore County, and went on to build the Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad, the longest privately built railroad in the state. Page's son inherited his energy and strong civic commitment. Always outspoken, they were involved in business and politics throughout the state. Walter Hines Page, the eldest, is remembered as Cary's "most distinguished son". An editor, publisher, and ambassador to Great Britain, he also rallied strongly for more practically-oriented public education for everyone in North Carolina. Of statewide significance as only Cary building known to relate to Page. (The Page home is gone.)
- C. Excellent example of the Second Empire style as applied to a small-town hotel.

  Well-proportioned building with Italianate detail and a nearly intact floor plan.

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The state-owned North Carolina Railroad reached Cary in 1854, and provided the impetus for Cary's development. Until then, Cary had been "merely a fork in the road." In the same year, Allison Francis Page and his wife moved to Cary and purchased 300 acres of land for \$2000. This land later formed the nucleus of Cary. It was probably the railroad's promise of transportation that attracted Page to the larea, as he was a lumberman, miller, contractor, shopkeeper and general entrepreneur. In

probably the railroad's promise of transportation that attracted Page to the area, as he was a lumberman, miller, contractor, shopkeeper and general entrepreneur. In 1868, the Chatham Railroad completed construction and Cary experienced a business boom. Factories and general stores soon appeared, providing work for the dispossessed of the Civil War, who had moved from their farms to the "new" town. In 1871, Cary was incorporated as a "dry" town, at Frank Page's suggestion. He was also the town founder and first mayor. A civic-minded man, he had also donated land for the Chatham railroad station.

The first mention of a hotel in Cary occurs in Branson's North Carolina Business Directory in 1869, which lists "Hotel, Cary, A. F. Page." Tradition holds that it was constructed by Page in about 1868. Although no documentation exists that definitively proves Frank Page himself built the hotel, it is likely, not only because he was a builder by trade, but also because he owned the land upon which the hotel stands, and lived adjacent to the property. In addition, his wife Catherine Raboteau Page came from a family of innkeepers. and it is probable that she knew the hotel business. In 1878, Mrs. A. J. Clegg was listed as hotel proprietor; presumably she leased it, as no change of ownership was recorded. Indeed, it is possible that the Pages used the hotel as rental property, as with eight children and nearly as many business enterprises, it is difficult to imagine them running a hotel too. Page's taxes for 1870 record that he received \$2150 in rental income; this money may have come from the hotel.

The Page family moved to Aberdeen, North Carolina, in 1884, and became quite wealthy in the lumber business. They also built the Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad, the longest and most profitable privately built railroad in the state. In the 1890s, Page constructed the dignified Park Hotel in Raleigh (demolished 1975), of which his biographer says:

"It is known to his intimate friends that he built the Park Hotel in Raleigh because he wanted to see in the capital of his State a first class hotel without a saloon."<sup>24</sup>

(The hotel, long a Raleigh landmark, was razed in the late 1970s.)
Page also built the Academy of Music and many houses in Raleigh, where he died in 1899. Page's biographer again recalls him:

"He went to the heart of nature, into vast and unopened, wooded regions, he built railroads, founded communities, shot the beams

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of light into dark forest, and poured the currents of trade into wide reaches of back country."

In addition, his biographer continues, "he manufactured enough lumber to have built ten cities the size of Raleigh." Besides Frank Page's legacy of building, he raised children who went on to become distinguished citizens in their own right.

Born in 1855 and raised in Cary, Walter Hines Page is fondly remembered as Cary's "most distinguished son." His accomplishments in North Carolina included his newspaper, The State Chronicle, a Raleigh-based newspaper which principally advocated equal practically-oriented education for all the citizens of North Carolina. One biographer described Page's contribution:

"No other man has seen so clearly or stated so forcebly and directly the significance of universal education in the South in establishing a democratic society."

Branded a radical, Page moved to the North, where he became editor of The Forum, The Atlantic Monthly and partner in the publishing house Doubleday, Page and Company. In 1913 Woodrow Wilson appointed Page to the post of ambassador to Great Britain, which Page served during the difficult years of World War I. In late 1918, he came home to North Carolina and died soon after.

Page's four brothers all became prominent in North Carolina. Frank Page served as chairman of the State Highway commission, while Allison became president of the Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad, a banker and businessman, as was his brother Junius Raboteau. Robert Newton Page was a congressman, and a candidate for governor in 1920. The Walker Hotel is the only reminder of Allison Francis Page and his family still standing in Cary today, as the neighboring Page House was razed.

The Pages sold the hotel property in 1884 to J. R. Walker for whom the hotel is named today. Long-time residents recall the strong-willed Nancey Walker (his wife), the "drummers" and train passengers who used to stay over, and most particularly the hotel dining room, where the trains "used to make a lunch stop. 32. and the feller (the cook) came out to announce it with a great big dinner bell." The hotel contained ten rooms which included living quarters for the Walkers. It is not known how many people were generally accommodated, as the rooms may have been divided into men's and women's quarters, or separate sections for families and singles. Mrs. Walker continued to run the hotel until 1916, and soon after this the property was divided into apartments, some inhabited by students of the prestigious Cary High School. After Mrs. Walker's death the hotel was inherited by her grandchildren. It is not clear when the property was inherited by the grandchildren as Mr. Walker's will provided for their

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inheritance. Because some four Nancy Walkers died in North Carolina between 1916 and 1926, it is impossible to pinpoint her date of death by death certificate. The terms of J. R. Walker's will provided, "Second. I give and devise to my wife Nancey H. Walker, the hotel, barn lot and garden, that is the land and buildings about the Walker Hotel, which are enclosed by fences for her natural life or widowhood. At her death or marriage title to the same shall best in my four grand (sic) children, LaRue, Isaac, John and Alsey D. Hunter."

The grandchildren sold the hotel in 1926 to R. J. Coburn, <sup>37</sup> who apparently continued to rent apartments, although at times the structure remained vacant. John F. Williams, a maintenance man for Durham City Schools, purchased the hotel in 1941, and converted it to a single-family dwelling with modern electricity, plumbing and coal heating. A considerable amount of repair was also necessary. The Williams family had a traveling summer enterrainment business 3nd many residents recall the painted wagons and grazing ponies in the front yard.

The property was sold again in 1971 to Robert Strother,  $^{40}$  a Cary florist and antique dealer. Fully appreciative of the historic and architectural value of the hotel, the Strothers have accomplished renovations that have been sensitive and minimal, thus preserving this sturdy survivor of Cary's railroad heritage.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Byrd, Around and About Cary (Raleigh, 1970), p. 57.

Warren Williams, personal interview, December, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> William Strother, personal interview, November, 1978.

 $<sup>^4</sup>$ Warren Williams, personal interview, December, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>William Strother, personal interview, November, 1978.

 $<sup>^{7}</sup>$ R. S. Dunham, Esther Ivey, Terrene Woodlief, personal interview, December, 1978,

 $<sup>^{8}</sup>$ Warren Williams, personal interview, December, 1978.

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- 9Warren Williams, personal interivew, December, 1978; Wake County Devisee Book, Book H, File #2958, p. 161, 1904.
  - 10 Warren Williams, personal interivew, December, 1978.
  - Thomas Byrd, Around and About Cary (Raleigh, 1970), p. 2.
  - $^{12}$ Wake County Deed Book 20, (November 23, 1854), pp. 530-531.
- <sup>13</sup>Branson, N. C. Business Directory (Raleigh), Volume 1867-1868, pp. 109-110; Volume 1869, pp. 153, 156, 157, 160; Volume 1872, pp. 221, 226, 227, 231; Volume 1878, pp. 291, 293, 294, 298, 299, 300, 301, 305, 660, 663.
  - 14 Thomas Byrd, Around and About Cary (Raleigh, 1970), p. 4, 5.
  - <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 6.
  - 16 Ibid., p. 5; Wake County Deed Book 33, p. 789.
  - 17 Branson, Volume 1869, p. 153.
  - <sup>18</sup>Wake County Deed Book 84, January 1, 1884, p. 753.
  - <sup>19</sup>Byrd, p. 3.
  - <sup>20</sup>Branson, Volume 1878, p. 293.
  - 21 Wake County Tax Lists, White Oak Township, 1870, p. 145.
- <sup>22</sup>J. N. Cole, "Allison Francis Page" in Ashe ed. <u>Biographical History of North</u> <u>Carolina</u> (Greensboro, 1906), p. 311.
  - $^{23}$ Ibid., p. 312; "The Progressive Farmer", October 24, 1899 (Raleigh), p. 4.
  - <sup>24</sup>J. N. Cole, p. 313.
  - <sup>25</sup><u>Ibid.</u>, p. 314.
  - <sup>26</sup>Byrd, p. 25.
- "Walter Hines Page", in Ashe ed. <u>Biographical History</u> of North Carolina, p. 319.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup>Byrd, p. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>31</sup> Wake County Deed Book 84, January 1, 1884, p. 752.

Esther Ivey, Terrene Woodlief, personal interview, December, 1978.

Dr. Doris King, personal interview, November, 1978.

North Carolina Year Book (News and Observer, Raleigh) 1916, p. 538.

<sup>35</sup> R. S. Dunham, personal interview, December, 1978.

<sup>36</sup> Wake County Devisee Book 4, File #2958, p. 161 (Date of probate, March 19, 1915).

<sup>37</sup> Wake County Deed Book 860, March 29, 1941, p. 209.

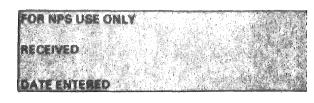
<sup>38</sup> Williams interview, December, 1978.

<sup>39</sup>Ivey, Woodlief interview, December, 1978.

<sup>40</sup> Wake County Deed Book 1984, April 19, 1971, p. 496.

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Bexers, F. Map of Wake Co	ounty. Nichols	and Gorman, 187	0.	
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Byrd, Thomas. Around and	About Cary. Ra	leigh: Daniel	Industries, 19	70.
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
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12 STATE HISTORIC PRI	ESERVATION D SIGNIFICANCE OF TI			N Marketon
NATIONAL	STATE		LOCAL	
As the designated State Historic Preservable hereby nominate this property for inclucriteria and procedures set forth by the N	sion in the National Re		- ;	
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER	SIGNATURE	HVVI 41	<b>)</b> //	
TITLE State Historic Prese	ervation Officer		DATE <sub>Mar</sub>	ch 8, 1979
FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROI	PERTY IS INCLUDED IN	THE NATIONAL REG	ISTER	
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Byrd, Thomas, and Holland, Evelyn. Cary's 100th Anniversary.

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Property Description

Beginning at the southwest corner of hotel fence near N. C. Warehouse, (now City Hall) running thence north 3 East 19 1/5 poles to the northeastern corner of Moye's front yard, thence south 84 East 50.3 poles to the R. & A. Railroad; thence with said road to N. C. Railroad right of way; thence with N. C. Railroad right of way to the beginning, and containing 3½ acres, more or less, SAVE AND EXCEPT from said tract of land on the east side of Cary Street conveyed at an earlier date by J. R. Walker as evidenced by deed recorded in Book 128 at Page 137 of the Wake County Registry.

This conveyance is made subject to the right of way of the North Carolina Railroad (now leased to Southern Railroad)

Excerpted from Wake County Deed Book 1984, Page 496, April 19, 1971, Williams to Strother

Beginning in centre (sic) of North Carolina Railroad thence north 10 2/5 poles to a stake in W. J. Maye's line thence east 19 3/5 poles to centre of North Carolina Railroad with said Rail Roads to the beginning 20 poles containing 2 Roads 21 poles subject to the chartered rights of the North Carolina Rail Road Company.

Excerpted from Wake County Deed Book 128 Page 137, February 24, 1893, J. R. Walker and Wife to W. H. Worstam

Note: The 34 acres, more or less, is the landlong associated with the property and still held with it. It is immediately next to the railroad.

