

Mission Statement

The mission of the Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse is to develop and implement a sound economic strategy for the preservation and utilization of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse in order to promote community, cultural, educational, ecological, and economic development.



Hyde County Historic Courthouse 1996

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Historic 1854 Courthouse
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Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse

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Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse

A new nonprofit organization, Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse, has recently been organized by local supporters of Hyde County's old courthouse. The courthouse (circa 1854) is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been empty since Hurricane Isabel in September 2003. After the new Hyde County Government Center opened in 2007, many Hyde County citizens were concerned that the older building might be demolished, and plans got underway to breathe new life into this vital piece of Hyde County's heritage.

In 2009, the County of Hyde appointed George Williams, Roy Clarke and Tom Davis to serve on the Historic Courthouse Oversight Committee. That committee, along with Hyde County Planner/Developer Alice

Keeney, has been working with the Swan Quarter Service Group and others to study the feasibility of renovating and operating the historic courthouse, and have determined the need for the new organization.

Contributions and donations to Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. All such funds are used towards our goals of preserving, utilizing and sustaining the Courthouse.



Hyde County Historic Courthouse 1999

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2010

Board of Directors

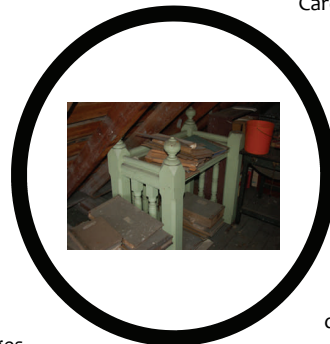
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Hyde Historic Courthouse History

Our History Committee is fast at work trying to sort out the discrepancies regarding the date this courthouse was actually completed. In the meanwhile, what we do know is that Hyde County was originally formed as Wickham Precinct in Bath County in 1705, and later renamed in honor of colonial Governor Edward Hyde. Over the years, several different villages have served as the county seat. Swan Quarter became the county seat in 1836 and this courthouse was eventually built.

It is said that Hyde County's courthouse is one of the few surviving antebellum courthouses in the state of North Carolina; however, it was remodeled in 1878 and 1908 and seems to have more of a Victorian rather than an antebellum character. The second floor courtroom remains virtually unchanged since it was first remodeled in 1876.

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in



Surviving Victorian stand from earlier Courtroom & ledgers

1979, the courthouse in this rural northeastern North Carolina coastal village has withstood many hurricanes and salt water intrusions. In most recent history, Hurricane Isabel in 2003 led to the building being abandoned. The original structure was saved from demolition but attached additions were removed and a new Government Center erected nearby.

There are many stories about the historic courthouse just waiting to be told! Trial judges arrived aboard boats that docked in Swan Quarter Bay and horses tied to hitching posts around the building were a common sight. The courthouse was a central point in the 1960s when the county's black population gathered there to protest the closing of the counties two primary black schools. They marched from the steps of the courthouse some 160 miles to the state capitol in Raleigh.

We are collecting the oral and written history about the courthouse and we are seeking old photographs and other memorabilia that will help us showcase our heritage and its history. If you can help, please call Mack McLawhorn at 252-943-6030, or contact any member of the Board of Directors.

As Hyde County citizens we cannot—with clear conscience, countenance the destruction of our historical and architectural heritage assets. Historic preservation has been shown throughout the country to be a positive and useful tool for neighborhood revitalization. It increases property values, fosters civic involvement and pride and enriches the quality of life for both residents and visitors.