

Our History & Heritage

HYDE COUNTY ★ NORTH CAROLINA

& OUR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



Henry Mouzon - 1775 Map
Public Domain | Library of Congress



RESOURCE LIST



County of Hyde
252-926-4400
www.hydecountync.gov



**Friends of Hyde County's
Historic 1854 Courthouse**
[www.facebook.com/
FriendsOfHydeCountysHistoricCourthouse](https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfHydeCountysHistoricCourthouse)



**Greater Hyde County
Chamber of Commerce**
www.facebook.com/hydecountychamber
www.visithyde.org



HYDEGENWEB
www.ncgenweb.us/hyde/HYDE.HTM



**Hyde County Historical &
Genealogical Society**
[www.facebook.com/
HydeCountyHistoricalAndGenealogicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/HydeCountyHistoricalAndGenealogicalSociety)



Mattamuskeet Lodge Society
252-926-4489
www.facebook.com/MattamuskeetLodgeSociety
www.mattamuskeetlodge.com



The Octagon House
www.facebook.com/octagonhouse.nc

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Cape Hatteras National Seashore

www.nps.gov/caha

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Alligator River NWR

www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator_river

Mattamuskeet NWR

www.fws.gov/refuge/mattamuskeet

Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR

www.fws.gov/refuge/pocosin-lakes/visit-us/locations/pungo-unit

Swan Quarter NWR

www.fws.gov/refuge/swanquarter

NORTH CAROLINA FERRY SYSTEM

800-293-3779

www.facebook.com/NCFerries

www.ncdot.gov/travel-maps/ferry-tickets-services

NORTH CAROLINA SCENIC BYWAYS

www.ncdot.gov/travel-maps/traffic-travel/scenic-byways

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

GAME LANDS

Gull Rock Game Land

www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Gull-Rock.pdf

New Lake Game Land

www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/New-Lake.pdf

Pungo River Game Land

www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Game-Land-Maps/Coastal/Pungo-River.pdf

BOAT LAUNCH RAMPS

Far Creek/Engelhard; Hydeland Canal; Lake Mattamuskeet; Rose Bay; & Swan Quarter:

www.ncpaws.org/ncwrcmaps/boatingaccessareas

Ocracoke Alive

252-921-0260

www.facebook.com/ocracokealive

www.ocracokealive.org

Ocracoke British Cemetery

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064547505326

Ocracoke Foundation

www.ocracokefoundation.org

Ocracoke Navigator

www.ocracokenavigator.com

Ocracoke Working Watermen's Association

www.ocracokewatermen.org

Outer Banks National Scenic Byway

www.nsbfoundation.com/nb/outer-banks-national-scenic-byway

Springer's Point Preserve (Coastal Land Trust)

www.facebook.com/CoastalLandTrust.org

www.coastallandtrust.org/lands/springers-point-preserve



Ocracoke Preservation Society

252-928-7375

www.facebook.com/opsmuseum

www.ocracokepreservationsociety.org



Ocracoke Tourism Development Authority

252-928-6711

www.facebook.com/visitocracokenc

www.visitocracokenc.com



Land Of Many Waters



Hyde County, NC is often referred to as the “Land of Many Waters.”

The Pamlico Sound lies between the mainland and Ocracoke Island. The Atlantic Ocean and the Pamlico Sound provide our southeastern borders, while the Alligator and Pungo Rivers define those to our north and west. The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway cuts a path through the mainland from the Pamlico Sound to the Alligator River. Nearby, Lake Mattamuskeet, North Carolina’s largest natural lake, covers a substantial portion of the mainland. Numerous manmade canals intersect the land. Marshes and estuaries abound.

These waters have defined Hyde County since its beginning. They continue to provide our transportation, livelihoods, and recreational activities.

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our nation with a brief look into the county’s history and take a glimpse of how far we’ve come. Included is a list of current resources that you can turn to for additional information.

HOW TO FIND US

Mainland Hyde County is accessible from the east or west via US 264 and NC 45 or NC 94 from the north. There is a small public airport in Engelhard: www.airnav.com/airport/7w6 .

Ocracoke Island is accessible by ferry from Cedar Island or Hatters via NC 12, or from Swan Quarter via NC 45. (See resource list for NC Ferry System information.) There is also a small public airport on the island: www.airnav.com/airport/w95.



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Mainland

In the Late 16th Century, John White, one of the explorers who had sailed from England on an expedition sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh, visited what is now known as Hyde County. A talented artist, White documented his travels with paintings and sketches of the region. Those drawings and his writings tell the story of the first inhabitants of this area, the American Indians.

The Secotan Indian village of Pomeioock, depicted in his 1585 watercolor painting, is thought to have lain to the southeast of Lake Mattamuskeet in the present-day Lake Landing community. White referred to the lake as "Paquippe", or shallow lake. The village's name is said to mean "a good landing place for boats."



Village of Pomeioock | Public Domain

White also drew a portrait of an Indian woman in the village of "Aquascogoc," said to be near present-day Scranton. The name translates to "where a place for disembarking exists." While the Englishmen were visiting the area, a silver cup was lost, and it was rumored to have been stolen by the natives. Returning later, the visitors burned the village and nearby corn fields in retaliation.



Aquascogoc Indian Woman | Public Domain

The Carolina Charter of 1663 rewarded eight noblemen (Lords Proprietors) with land on the eastern coastline of the United States. Part of this territory eventually became known as the state of North Carolina. Very quickly, the Lords Proprietors carved out the three counties of Albemarle, Clarendon, and Craven.

Wickham Precinct – which eventually became Hyde County – lay in the Albemarle region. Established in 1705, the name was changed to Hyde Precinct in 1712, to honor Governor Edward Hyde, a distant cousin of Edward Hyde, one of the original Lords Proprietors.

Following the Tuscarora War (1711-15), described as the bloodiest colonial war in North Carolina, the Mattamuskeet and Coree Indians were settled in Hyde County. Mattamuskeet Reservation was established in 1727, after whites began encroaching on their land.

Alternately described as “wild deserts” and a “wilderness,” the county was slow to develop. Land grants or patents were used as incentives for people to settle on the mainland. The eastern and western-most regions developed more quickly.



Makelyville Saw Mill | Photographer Unknown

The waterways surrounding the county provided livelihoods for many of the settlers. Canals were built to facilitate movement of goods from the central part of the mainland to the bays and sounds. Sawmills, gristmills, and large lumber operations sprang up. Inspection centers were set up for beef, pork, rice, tar, pitch, turpentine, sawed lumber, shingles, staves, and other goods that were then loaded on ships for transport. Shipbuilding was a major colonial enterprise.



Makelyville Saw Mill | Roy Clarke Collection

Life in early Hyde County was brutal. Of necessity, the first villages were located near waterways. Mailboats delivered mail. Any food that was not grown locally arrived by water, along with supplies and passengers. There were no paved roads; dirt roads between villages were hazardous. The geographical isolation of each community from the others – and the rest of the state – led its residents to become hardy, self-sufficient people. At one time there were 56 churches in the county. Each village had several different denominations, and traveling preachers often rotated between churches of their denomination.

Most African Americans living in Hyde County in the eighteenth century were enslaved. Having been bought and sold as chattel, they lived even harder lives than their white counterparts. Later, African Americans served as maritime pilots between the island and the mainland, much to the consternation of the white maritime pilots. In a petition to the governor in 1773, the white pilots claimed that mainland owners were exporting their enslaved to the island, who, along with the free African Americans, were impinging on their business.

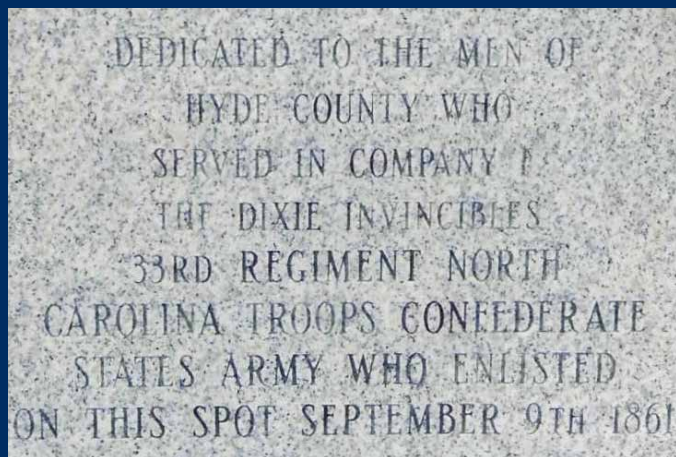
The “shot that was heard around the world” and led to the American Revolution was heard in Hyde County, too. Many local men joined the fight for the nation’s independence, just as they have fought in subsequent wars to keep us free. The names of the men and women known to have served their country are available on HYDEGENWEB (see resource page). Without their service, America would not be celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 2026!

The 19th century began with a focus on improving the various transportation routes within the county. New roads were constructed, and road maintenance became a top priority. Several turnpike roads with tolls were built as private operations. Later in the century, the county imposed a tax to purchase two of the turnpike companies.

Several small ferry operations also began to flourish. A steamboat carried passengers and freight between several locations in the county and Washington, NC.

Meanwhile, canals were being dug throughout the county. The Mattamuskeet Lake Canal Company cut a waterway to drain the lake into the Pamlico Sound. Some of the canals quickly shoaled up and became unusable. It is reported that there were at least two covered bridges constructed in the latter part of the century.

These efforts aided in the commercial development of a county dependent primarily on agriculture, commercial fishing, and timber harvesting. Inland travel between the small villages improved. Even so, the importance of the mainland's waterways did not diminish.



Dixie Invincibles Monument, Photo Credit | Margie Brooks

The onset of the Civil War in 1861 quickly involved Hyde County. While the Union Army never fully occupied the county, Union troops stationed nearby often made raids into the mainland for food and supplies. Over ninety local young men enlisted in the Confederate Army. One regiment became known as the “Dixie Invincibles.” A monument in their honor, with the names of all the county men who served, stands in the Middletown community. Union sympathizers became known as “Buffaloes,” a term that also was given to Black soldiers serving in the Union Army.

Enslaved persons, emboldened by the chaos, escaped, and many joined forces with the Union troops.

Hyde County men – and eventually – women, continued to answer the call to duty by serving in seven wars following the Civil War. A Hyde County Roll of Honor, with the names of those known to have been killed in action during wartime in the 20th century, can be found on HYDEGENWEB (see resource page).

Hyde County has known its share of weather-related events. The story of one such event took place in 1876 in the village of Swan Quarter. A couple of years earlier, members of the Methodist faith wanted to build a permanent church building. The perfect spot had been located, and an offer was made to the property owner, but he refused to sell. An alternate lot was gifted to them near where the present Hyde County Government Center was built in 2007. An unpretentious building had barely been constructed thereon, with a dedication set for September 17, when a great storm broke out. The rain and wind were fierce and the tide so high that it moved the church from its pier foundation, and it began floating down the street. The building went straight down Oyster Creek Road to a corner, bumping into a general store. It then took a sharp right turn and floated down Main Street, took a left turn, and settled directly in the middle of the property which had been refused. The property owner, seeing the mighty work of providence, deeded the property to the congregation. Years later, when it was dedicated, it was named “Providence.” Today, “The Church Moved by the Hand of God” still sits behind a larger brick church built in 1912-13.





Photo Credit | Margie Brooks

As the 20th century rolled in, the county's population was reported at its highest ever, with 9,278 people listed on the 1900 census. The early 1900s saw little change for the mainland. The mill villages still flourished. Commercial fishermen plied the waters of the Pamlico Sound harvesting fish, crabs, shrimp, and oysters. Roads and other infrastructure continued to be built. More canals were dug. The New Holland, Higginsport, and Mount Vernon Railroad ran through the western community of Ponzer, eastward to New Holland in central mainland.

The county's rich Blackland soil began to be farmed in earnest, with corn, cotton, and soybeans. Even Lake Mattamuskeet was drained three different times in a futile effort to farm its rich lakebed. The Mattamuskeet Pumping Station was built and, around it, the village of New Holland. The Station, the world's largest at the time, housed four steam coal-fired engines which pumped 1,200,000 gallons of water out of the lake per minute. (Read more about Mattamuskeet Pumping Station – later repurposed as Mattamuskeet Lodge – see pages 34-35.)

Both the Works Projects Administration (WPA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had programs created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to help the nation recover from the Great Depression. Among other things, the WPA constructed the Ponzer Community Center (still in use) in western Hyde County. The CCC "boys," as they were called, worked on both Mattamuskeet and Swan Quarter National Wildlife Refuges. Their best-known project was the conversion of the Mattamuskeet Pumping Station into Mattamuskeet Lodge. The location of a hunting lodge on the Atlantic Flyway attracted many hunters, and soon the county became known as "The Canada Goose Hunting Capital of the World."



Mattamuskeet Pumping Station,
Mattamuskeet Foundation, Inc.

Despite Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation freeing enslaved, African Americans living in the South continued to be repressed in many ways. The 1954 landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* by the US Supreme Court ruled that racially segregated schools were unconstitutional. Even so, it was 10 years later, when the Court declared segregation illegal by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that changes began to materialize within the county.

Only the threat of the loss of federal funds forced the Hyde County Board of Education to develop a plan that would abolish the dual school system in the 1965-66 school year. Even that did little to resolve the issues: plans for desegregation were made and quickly discarded, as the matter seemed to defy resolution.

The African Americans had been left out of the planning process. They were dismayed at the lack of respect for their educational heritage and the impending closure of O. A. Peay

and Davis Schools, the only two surviving Black schools in the county. They organized a school boycott (1968-69), which would ultimately last the entire school year. Rallies and daily protests involving long marches from one unincorporated community to another within the county were held.

The resulting "Movement," as it was known locally, included two marches from Swan Quarter to the state capital of Raleigh, NC – a distance of some 200 miles. Gathering supporters along the way, over 600 protesters first arrived in Raleigh on a cold February day and were met by members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, including Golden Frinks and the Reverend Andrew Young. The two schools were not closed, and ultimately they remained open as integrated elementary schools until the 1990s. For an in-depth study of the Movement, read "Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South" by David S. Cecelski.





Photo Credit | Michael Corlis

The weather, especially the hurricanes and nor'easters, has always played a vital role in Hyde County. Our livelihoods, our economy, our fragile environment, and many other aspects of our daily lives are linked to the weather.

While many things have changed over the years, Hyde County remains much the same from decade to decade. Our way of life is quiet. Neighbors help neighbors. Nature and wildlife opportunities abound.

We are still sustained by the waters that surround us. Our commercial fishermen (both on the island and the mainland) harvest over 3.5 million pounds of seafood annually, making them the 3rd largest producer in the state.

Thirty percent of the mainland (390,000 acres) is fertile black

farmland. There are 189 farms. Nine of those farms are North Carolina Century Farms. Dating from the 1800s, these farms have been in continuous family ownership for at least 100 years. While corn, cotton, and soybeans are still the primary crops, various vegetables are also grown on a smaller scale.

Ocracoke's pristine beaches are part of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and the island is also on the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway. The mainland has four National Wildlife Refuges, three state game lands, and five boat launch ramps, all offering hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing opportunities. The mainland is on two North Carolina Scenic Byways (Alligator River Route and Pamlico Scenic Byway).

A complete resource list can be found on page 1-3.

Ocracoke Island

Ocracoke Island played a modest role in the colonization of the Western Hemisphere when Sir Richard Grenville's flagship became stranded in a "pounding surf" in Wococon Inlet in 1585. Northeast of Wococon was Croatoan, home to Algonquin-speaking Indians, including Manteo, who greeted the first English explorers in 1584-1587. During the succeeding years Wococon became joined to the southern portion of Croatoan. In the mid-nineteenth century "Ocracoke" became the standardized spelling for the island we know today.



Secotan Indian Warrior | Public Domain

In 1663 King Charles II granted the colony of "Carolana" (including Ocracoke Island) to eight "Lords Proprietors" as a reward for faithful support during the English Civil War. The Proprietors maintained control of Ocracoke for more than half a century. In 1715 the North Carolina Colonial Assembly, recognizing the commercial importance of Ocracoke Inlet, passed an act to settle maritime pilots on the island.

During the early eighteenth century, pirates contributed a colorful chapter to the island's history. Edward Teach, a daring brigand of the seas, was a personal friend of North Carolina's governor, Charles Eden. After eighteen months of plunder and pillage, Teach, best known as Blackbeard, was killed in a naval battle at Ocracoke Inlet on November 22, 1718, ending the "golden age" of piracy.



Blackbeard | Public Domain



Photo Credit | Susan Sumner

Individual European ownership of Ocracoke Island began in 1719, when John Lovick, Secretary of the Colony of North Carolina, was granted the island of "Ocacock." Over the next decades the island, which was used primarily for grazing livestock, changed hands several times. In about 1730 the first maritime pilots settled on Ocracoke, in an area known as Pilot Town. Because larger vessels were often unable to safely navigate the inlet, pilots were essential for guiding ships across the bar and through the ever-changing channels into deeper water.

On July 30, 1759, William Howard purchased Ocracoke Island. He was the last colonial-era owner of the island. By 1770 approximately one hundred and twenty-five individuals, about one-fifth of whom were enslaved people of African descent, were

living on Ocracoke. After a member of the Colonial Assembly remarked that "those lawless Bankers on Occacock Island are not paying taxes anywhere," the island was finally annexed to Carteret Precinct. In 1845 Ocracoke was transferred to Hyde County.

With the outbreak of war with the British in 1775, and the ratification of the Declaration of Independence, Ocracoke Inlet was quickly recognized as a crucially important passage for moving ammunition and supplies to the mainland and then to General Washington's Continental Army. The pilots enabled the war effort by guiding vessels supportive of the war and leaving British ships stranded outside the inlet. North Carolina's royal governor wrote that "the contemptible port of Occacock has become a great channel of supply to the rebels." Armed British vessels began harassing patriots' ships attempting to use Ocracoke Inlet. On July 12, 1776, a company was organized at Ocracoke "to guard against all enemies who may offer to oppose us here." Due to geography and the firm commitment of islanders to the cause of independence, Ocracoke Inlet continued to serve the needs of the revolutionaries until the war ended in 1783.

Over the next two hundred and forty three-years Ocracoke prospered and grew. Located near the southern end of the island, and nestled around a beautiful natural harbor, Ocracoke village attracted pilots, sailors, commercial fishermen, and entrepreneurs. Eventually, as sturdier homes were built and more families were raised on this remote barrier island, stores, churches, and schools were established.

Vintage Silver Lake | OPS

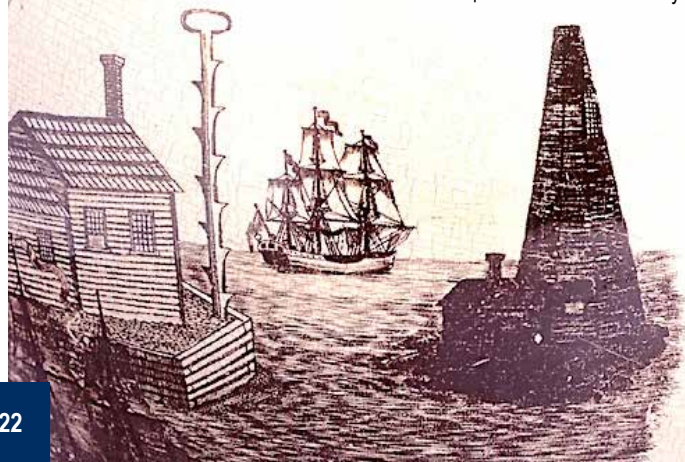


For many years trade and commerce continued to play a major role in the lives of the settlers on Ocracoke Island. In 1795 Jonathan Price, an early surveyor, wrote that the men on the island “are all pilots; and their number of head of families is about thirty.”

A quarter of a century after the end of the War of Independence, British forces were again harassing shipping along the eastern seaboard. The United States declared war on Britain on June 18, 1812. On November 27 the British Navy instituted a blockade “around all major ports along the nation’s East Coast,” and British ships made several attacks on American vessels anchored at Ocracoke. By September 1813 Ocracoke was in a state of blockade. Hostilities continued until the war ended in 1815.

As the United States entered the nineteenth century, shipping along the Atlantic seaboard continued to increase. Already, John Blount, a prominent politician, merchant, landowner, and major enslaved owner, along with his partner, John Wallace, had seen the need for a commercial enterprise near Ocracoke Inlet to provide pilots and lighterers¹ for incoming and outgoing vessels. By 1789 Blount had chosen for a base of operations a twenty-five-acre island of oyster shells in Pamlico Sound which he stabilized, enlarged, and named Shell Castle. Blount and Wallace established wharves and warehouses, a ship’s chandlery, and a tavern, as well as several dwellings for the owners, servants, and enslaved. Mullet and porpoise fisheries were initiated, as well as occasional ship building, salvage operations, and storage services. By 1798 Shell Castle boasted Ocracoke Inlet’s first lighthouse, a 65-foot wooden structure. By 1810, 41 people were living on Shell Castle. In addition to serving as pilots and lighterers, the enslaved population worked as clerks, stevedores, laborers, sailors, fishermen, and domestics. The lighthouse was struck by lightning and burned in 1818.

Shell Castle | NC Museum of History



Ocracoke Lighthouse, 1893 | Public Domain

A number of schooners were built on Ocracoke during the nineteenth century. Island natives served as captains and crew. Ocracoke Inlet continued to function as the primary passage for vessels bound for the mainland. In 1823 workers began construction on Ocracoke’s 75-foot-tall brick lighthouse. The iconic white beacon was illuminated on August 15, 1824, and was designed “to give warning to mariners when off the Inlet, or to prevent vessels bound in from passing the bar at night.” Today, the lighthouse, with its steady beam, serves as the most recognized symbol of the community of Ocracoke.

Shipwrecks on the North Carolina coast continued to mount in spite of lighthouses. Nearly 2500 vessels have met their fate in North Carolina’s “graveyard of the Atlantic.” Many older homes in the Ocracoke Historic District were built with lumber salvaged from ships that wrecked in storm-tossed seas. On October 9, 1837, Ocracoke Island was the scene of one of the worst sea disasters in United States history when the steamboat Home ran aground about seven miles north of the village. Ninety persons lost their lives that night as the wooden, side-wheel steamer broke apart in the surf during a violent hurricane. News coverage of the disaster led the US Congress to pass legislation requiring all sea-going vessels to carry at least one life preserver for each person on board.

By 1840 more than 1400 sailing vessels were passing through Ocracoke Inlet annually. Local licensed marine pilots continued to ensure safe passage across the bar.

¹Lighterers unloaded cargo from larger sailing vessels into smaller boats to allow the larger ships to pass over the bar.

On September 7, 1846, present-day Hatteras Inlet was created during a major hurricane. Ship captains quickly discovered that Hatteras Inlet was more navigable than Ocracoke Inlet. Maritime traffic soon shifted there. Over the next several decades almost all Ocracoke pilots moved to Hatteras, or abandoned piloting in favor of seafaring. They shipped out on schooners carrying lumber, shingles, rum, and general merchandise between ports in the Caribbean and New England.

In 1860 about 30% of Ocracoke's 544 residents were in bondage to their white enslavers. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 brought discord as some residents served in the Confederate Army, while others fought for the Union. The war disrupted commerce along the east coast, and seafaring became more dangerous. Although no military facilities were established on Ocracoke, a fort on nearby Beacon Island was the scene of a naval attack in 1861.

At the close of the Civil War all of Ocracoke's enslaved population left the island. In contrast, Hercules and Winnie Blount moved from Blounts Creek, NC, to Ocracoke, where Winnie may have once lived. Hercules and Winnie were the progenitors of Ocracoke's only extended post-Civil War Black family. Their daughter, Jane, married mainlander, Leonard Bryant, and they raised nine children. Julius, Mildred, Annie Laura and Muzel Bryant were the last of their family to call Ocracoke home. Muzel died in 2008, just short of her 104th birthday.

As Ocracoke struggled to recover after 1865, railroads connecting cities along the eastern seaboard curtailed schooner traffic up and down the coast. It soon became apparent that seafaring was a dwindling career.

When the United States Lifesaving Service established their first Ocracoke station on the north end of the island in 1883, native islander, James Howard, was appointed keeper (officer in charge). All six surfmen were also recruited from among the local population. For the next thirty-two years the men of the USLSS rescued hundreds of sailors whose vessels wrecked at Ocracoke. A second station was established in 1903. When the Life Saving Service became the United States Coast Guard in 1915, many islanders continued serving in the new agency.

In the late nineteenth century, off-island entrepreneurs saw in Ocracoke potential business opportunities. With the depletion of clams in New York's Great South Bay, James Doxsee moved his clam canning operation from New York to Ocracoke in 1897/98. Island men were recruited to harvest clams, while young women and widows were employed to open and process the bivalves. By 1910, when the quantity of Pamlico Sound clams declined, Doxsee moved his operation again, this time to Florida.



Railroads were also partnering with steamships to carry vacationers to the up-and-coming resorts at Nags Head. Recognizing the potential for profit at Ocracoke, entrepreneurs built a large hotel on the shore of Silver Lake in 1885. For the next fifteen years steamships brought guests from Washington, NC, and other communities to the Ocracoke Hotel to enjoy fishing, boating, swimming, and square dancing. When the building burned in 1900, the heyday of carefree vacationing came to an end. Ocracoke remained a popular destination, but for the next several decades the island attracted primarily anglers and waterfowl hunters who arrived in the fall and winter.





Photo Credit | Connie Leinbach

World War II was closer to our shores than many realized. During the first six months of 1942 Ocracoke residents reported ships burning offshore as the result of aggressive U-boat activity. In July the US Navy constructed a naval base on Silver Lake Harbor and erected near the ocean beach a communications center for a top-secret underwater magnetic indicator loop. The British Cemetery is the final resting place of four sailors from HMT Bedfordshire, which was torpedoed on May 11, 1942. Coast Guard personnel discovered their bodies on the beach shortly after the tragedy, and local residents arranged for fitting burials. Today, the graves are under the care of the British War Graves Commission, the U.S. Coast Guard, and Hatteras Island's Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. Every spring, a memorial service is held to honor these and other sailors who served in WWII.

Ocracoke Island's primary connection to the mainland continued to be by boat. In the late nineteenth century gas-powered mailboats replaced sailboats. The last two mailboats, the *Aleta* and the *Dolphin*, which brought mail, groceries, supplies, and passengers to the island daily, operated until 1952 and 1964, respectively. When the mailboat tied up at the dock in the late afternoon almost the entire village turned out to visit with

neighbors, share news, and collect their mail. It was the main social event of the day.



Mailboat Aleta, c.1950 | Margueritta Boos Collection, OPS

For generations, islanders have celebrated Independence Day with a flag-raising ceremony, speeches, and a lively parade with homemade floats. In years past, the highlight of the day was the pony-penning. Several hundred semi-wild, free-ranging Banker ponies were herded into a corral, where colts were branded and some were sold to local or off-island buyers. In the 1950s island boys formed the only mounted Boy Scout troop in the nation.

Although Ocracoke continues to be isolated, major changes occurred in the twentieth century. The village was electrified in 1938. With electricity came household lights, refrigerators, and water pumps, as well as a municipal ice plant. Ice and gas motors for boats finally made it profitable to carry fish to markets on the mainland, and commercial fishing blossomed. Frazier Peele established a car ferry operation across Hatteras Inlet in 1950. A paved road from the inlet to Ocracoke village followed seven years later. With the conversion to state-operated ferries, including trips from Cedar Island and Swan Quarter, and the dedication of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore in 1958, modern tourism flourished as vacationers sought the island's wide, undeveloped, and pristine beaches. A municipal water system was established in 1977. Islanders opened restaurants, motels, gift shops, and other businesses catering to the needs of visitors. Passenger ferries and village trams followed in recent years.

An abundance of waterfowl and rich sound and ocean habitats had long lured hunters and recreational fishermen to Ocracoke Island. Hunters and anglers continue to visit to pursue their sport. Surfers and windsurfers have followed.



Photo Credit | Russ Reynolds

By the turn of the twenty-first century the population of Ocracoke had grown to nearly 1000 residents. In 2019 a storm surge from Hurricane Dorian flooded much of the island. The schoolhouse, several other buildings and businesses, and at least fifty homes were destroyed. Within the next few years the community, with help from off-island volunteers, rebuilt stronger and safer. Today, in addition to a thriving tourist economy, Ocracoke boasts a robust commercial fishing industry. The island also supports carpenters and other tradespeople, health care providers, a handful of professionals, and several dozen educators who teach in the state's smallest, and newly-rebuilt, Pre-K-12 school. The Ocracoke Methodist Church, the Assembly of God's Life-Saving Church, and the recently-built Stella Maris Catholic Chapel serve the spiritual needs of many residents and visitors.

For more than forty years Ocracoke has been home to an increasingly vibrant Latino community whose members have contributed to the life of the village as neighbors, employers, workers, and enthusiastic volunteers. Various events throughout the year celebrate their rich traditions.

Numerous non-profit organizations contribute to the civic health of the community. Notable are the Ocracoke Civic and Business Association; the Ocracoke Preservation Society, which oversaw the rehabilitation of the 1901 Odd Fellows Lodge; and the Ocracoke Foundation, which saved the island fish house, preserved the centrally-located Community Square, and established the Working Watermen's Exhibit. Volunteers support the library, the recreation park, the school, the churches,

and other causes. Ocracoke Alive promotes the arts through the June Music and Storytelling Festival as well as various school programs, including cultural heritage events. Other seasonal festivals draw visitors and sportsmen from North Carolina and surrounding states. Local and off-island musicians perform regularly throughout the village, and the traditional island square dance is held several times a year.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE; CHALLENGES AND VISIONS

Geography and weather, in countless ways, continue to influence the residents of Hyde County, which includes mainland farming communities in the low-lying inner coastal plain and Ocracoke Island on the Outer Banks. Since the founding of the nation, our many waterways – the Atlantic Ocean, Pamlico Sound, rivers, canals, and lakes – have provided transportation, livelihood, and recreation for inhabitants and visitors. However, climate change, hurricanes, storms, and accompanying floods have challenged us from the very beginning. Residents of the county have also faced trials related to community-building and economic development. Regional, state, national, and international events will surely continue to impact us as well. Through it all, we have learned to be resourceful and resilient, to value diversity, cooperation, and equality of opportunity. We build on the hopes and ambitions of the earliest settlers, as well as the aspirations and dreams of later visionaries. We shall continue to celebrate the spirit of our nation's origins by promoting for all of our residents, the blessings of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, noble values enshrined in our earliest struggles for independence in 1776.

The National Register of Historic Places

(NRHP), managed by the National Park Service, was authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Hyde County is proud to have eleven places in this official list of the Nation's historic places which are worthy of preservation.

ALBIN B. SWINDELL HOUSE AND STORE (Privately owned) Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Placed in the Register in 1986. The store dates from about 1890. The original 1850s story and a jump house was raised to two stories around 1903. Along with several outbuildings, they were located in a small crossroads trading and community center and surrounded by rich, fertile farmlands. In 1920, the store was moved back several feet when US Highway 264 was widened. The architectural integrity of the store was not impaired. It became the first store in the county to be supplied with electricity in 1923. Both house and store still have considerable historical significance.



Fairfield Methodist Church, Photo Credit | Edward Garrison

FAIRFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT Fairfield, NC 27826

Placed in the Register in 1985. Along the north shore of Lake Mattamuskeet lies the village of Fairfield and its 19th and early 20th Century collection of homes, churches, and mercantile businesses. Primarily an agrarian community, the village prospered after the Fairfield Canal, which ran north from Fairfield, through the Alligator River and the Albemarle Sound. was completed in the late 1800s. New markets to the north in Elizabeth City, NC and Norfolk, VA were opened up to both merchants and farmers. The district includes residences in the Italianate and Carpenter Gothic styles, six churches and the Canal, along with numerous businesses.

GEORGE V. CREDLE HOUSE & CEMETERY (Privately owned) Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Placed in NRHP in 1985. Rose Bay Plantation, as the house is known locally, is a Greek Revival style house and a remarkable example of a 19th Century plantation house. A small family cemetery behind the house remains well-tended. The house was restored in 2016.



Photo Credit | Michael Adams

DAVIS SCHOOL 33460 & 33478 US 264, Engelhard, NC 27814

Placed in the Register in 2023. Built in Engelhard in 1953, with improvements/additions in 1964 and 1971, it is one of only two surviving Black school buildings in Hyde County. Once completed, current repairs and restoration will allow it to once again serve the community as a youth, recreation, and community center.



Photo Credit | Margie Brooks

HYDE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

10 Oyster Creek Road, Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Placed in the Register in 1979. One of only a few surviving antebellum courthouses in North Carolina, the Hyde County Courthouse (listed as being built in the 1850s and since documented as 1838), had additions built onto the original structure in 1882 and 1909, all of which are still standing. The Victorian details and quality craftsmanship are still visible in the second-floor courtroom, which remains much the same as when it was built. It is currently unoccupied and awaiting funding for repairs and restoration.

THE INKWELL – THE OCTAGON HOUSE

30868 US 264, Engelhard, NC 27824

Placed in the Register in 1978. Also known as the Inkwell or Inkbottle house, the eight-sided house was built about 1857 and is one of two such antebellum houses known to survive in North Carolina. Built using board wall exterior construction to form the walls, there are no vertical posts except for the windows and doors. A central chimney with four fireplaces provided heat to the three rooms along with hallways on both the upstairs and downstairs levels. Currently being restored, guided tours are occasionally available.



Photo Credit | Clare Baum



Amity Church, Photo Credit | Edward Garrison

LAKE LANDING HISTORIC DISTRICT

Engelhard, NC 27824

Placed in the Register in 1986. The district encompasses 13,400 acres in eastern Hyde County. The entire area is part of the early 18th Century Mattamuskeet Indian Reservation. The agrarian setting reflects the spatial organization of the structures, vegetation, numerous creeks, swamps and marshes of the district. The antebellum plantation houses and characteristic vernacular examples of domestic, agricultural, and commercial architecture indicates the tastes, values, occupations, and economics of its residents of the time.



Photo Credit | Lee Brimage

LAKE MATTAMUSKEET PUMP STATION - MATTAMUSKEET LODGE

1 Mattamuskeet Road, Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Placed in the Register 1980. Constructed in 1915-16 as the world's largest pumping station, the building housed four coal-fired Lentz steam engines (850 hp each) which allowed the huge centrifugal pumps to move 1,200,000 gallon of water per minute. The plan was to drain Lake Mattamuskeet so its rich lakebed could be used for farming. Throughout the years, wheat, corn, and soybeans were grown. But, in 1932, after the failure of three different companies to successfully keep the lake drained, the operation was closed down. The hotel, homes, and other

buildings in the small town of New Holland were flooded. The property was sold to the U. S. Government in 1934, and the Mattamuskeet Migratory Bird Refuge was created. Members of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a government work program established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, arrived to work on the new Refuge. The pumping plant was converted into a rustic hunting and fishing lodge. A spiral staircase was installed in the old smokestack, offering a view of the lake and visiting waterfowl. It opened to the public in 1937 and the area was soon known as the "Canada Goose Hunting Capital of the World." In 1974, after the Refuge had closed to goose hunting in 1972, Mattamuskeet Lodge closed. In the 1990s, it reopened for a short time. Currently unoccupied and undergoing repairs and restoration.



Photo Credit | Candice Cobb

OCRACOKE LIGHT STATION - OCRACOKE LIGHTHOUSE

360 Lighthouse Road, Ocracoke, NC 27960

Placed in NRHP in 1977. Constructed at a cost of \$11,359.35 in 1823 the lighthouse stands 75 feet tall. Nearby stands a one and a half story, three-bedroom keepers quarters. The lighthouse is constructed of brick with a mortar surface which has been whitewashed. Inside the conical tower a metal spiral staircase circles the inside walls up to the lens room. A brick pediment supports the iron gallery with double railing around the lens room. Recent research indicates that the lighthouse was first lit on August 15, 1824. The old oil vapor lamps were replaced with modern electric bulbs in 1938 and the light is visible for 14 miles at sea. It is the oldest functioning lighthouse structure on the North Carolina Coast.

WYNNE'S FOLLY (Privately owned), Engelhard, NC 27824

Placed in the Register in 1977. Built in the late 1840s, described as a substantial Greek Revival plantation house and the most ambitious one still surviving in the county. Built for Richard Wynne, who was courting a particular young lady at the time. Alas, she married someone else, thus the unusual nickname.

OCRACOKE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ocracoke, NC 27960

Placed on the Register in 1990. The district encompasses about 200 acres around Silver Lake Harbor on the island of Ocracoke. The village of Ocracoke is North Carolina's only surviving, inhabited, Outer Banks island settlement that still retains much of its historic character. Over 250 contributing buildings, structures, and other sites offer a variety of styles to include antebellum, story and a jump, coastal cottages, bungalow, and more. Other historic resources such as cisterns, picket fences, and cemeteries abound.

Photo Credit | Jessica Caldwell





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