

Research Uncovers Portrait Of Gov. Edward Hyde

By PEGGY HOWE
An encounter between an English local historian, a North Carolina archivist and a mayor's daughter has filled a major gap in the pictorial history of North Carolina.

Gov. Edward Hyde was among four governors for whom there was no known portrait. A long and involved search has finally uncovered a likeness of this early North Carolina chief executive.

The story that unfolded is an exciting one for North Carolina and the N. C. Museum of History a section of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

Sometime during 1974, Norman Turner, an English civil servant interested in local history, while researching old records of a village called Hyde in Cheshire, England, learned that a member of the Hyde family had gone to North Carolina in 1710 to become governor and apparently had died there.

Turner wrote to the American consul in nearby Manchester, England, requesting the name of someone in North Carolina who could furnish information on Gov. Hyde. The name of Rebecca Swindell, president of the Hyde County Historical Society, was forwarded to Turner. A lengthy correspondence followed with Miss Swindell providing information from

colonial and state records, while at the same time, Turner was enriching her supply of information available from Hyde in England.

In 1975 Turner wrote to Miss Swindell, excited that he thought he was on the trail of a portrait of Gov. Hyde. A meeting with the aging daughter of a former mayor of Hyde had led to the knowledge that a portrait existed.

Turner's research and talks with the mayor's daughter revealed that about the turn of the century the last of the members of the Hyde family had given family portraits and other possessions to the mayor of Hyde, who, in turn, presented them to the local library.

Turner discovered the portrait of Edward Hyde among other portraits and possessions languishing in the library's "lumber room" (storage room). The portrait's very bad condition included almost three centuries accumulation of dirt and grime plus minor damage.

Meanwhile, George Stevenson, a North Carolina archivist who had been sent to London to search colonial records for the N.C. Archives, entered into correspondence with Turner.

Stevenson traveled to Hyde to examine the portrait. Also traveling in Europe shortly after the

portrait was discovered was Moussa Domit, director of the N.C. Museum of Art (NCMA), who stopped by to examine the portrait.

All pronounced it authentic — indeed a portrait of Edward Hyde — with its history completely traceable.

At the same time, Stevenson interviewed natives of the area about the Hyde family and their possessions. Stevenson learned that Gov. Hyde's daughter married Gov. George Clarke of New York. Portraits of the New York governor and his wife, Anne Hyde Clarke, plus a presentation sword had been given to the public library at the same time as the Gov. Hyde portrait.

The N.C. Museum of History offered to purchase the Edward Hyde portrait. The regional government, with jurisdiction over the area (and the library), declined to sell the portrait, explaining the portrait's association with their local history is equally as important as that of North Carolina.

However, when the recently-organized Museum of History Associates offered to finance restoration and copying of the portrait, the regional government agreed to allow North Carolina to borrow the portrait for a year. The NCMA will restore the painting and the Museum of History will commission a copy to be made for permanent display.

Catherine Leach, conservator of the NCMA, will do the restoration work on the Hyde portrait when it arrives. She as it happens, is from the same county where the portrait was discovered.

Gov. Hyde had a difficult two years as governor of one of the colonies of the Lords Proprietors, the English king's friends who were given title to the area. Born about 1650, Hyde was a man of 60 when he arrived in Carolina as deputy governor, only to discover that the governor of both Carolinas had died before signing Hyde's deputy commission.

Hyde took office Jan. 24, 1710, as Council president in order to govern the colony of North Carolina. During his term the joint government of both Carolinas was divided and Hyde became autonomous executive of that part designated "North Carolina."

In addition to Tuscarora Indian wars, Hyde had inherited a dispute between Quakers and member of the English church regarding oaths required of members taking seats in the General Assembly.

Gov. Hyde died September 8, 1712, victim of a yellow fever epidemic.

Stevenson commented, "Like other governors, we had suspected that a portrait of Hyde existed, since he was of a prominent family, but did not know where to look."

In the near future, the portrait of Hyde will arrive from England, undergo the extensive restoration necessary, and then hang for a year while the copy is made.

With the discovery of the Hyde portrait, one more gap in the history of North Carolina is filled.

Severe Weather

Causes Hardships

RALEIGH — The severely cold weather has caused undue hardships both financially and otherwise for many North Carolinians from east to west. Those who have been affected the most are those with fixed low incomes, such as the elderly and those families where the breadwinner has become unemployed because of the energy crisis.

Arthur Jones and his wife and three children are a perfect example of how these financial hardships have mounted for many North Carolinians during the past several months. Jones had a good paying job in one of the plants across the state that had to lay off employees because of the energy crisis. His income has been reduced considerably; limited to an unemployment check.

Not only has the extremely cold weather forced the Jones family to have to live on less money, it has caused them to have significantly higher living expenses. Their fuel bill has increased by 40 per cent and medical costs have escalated because two of his children have had the flu.

"Thousands of families like the Jones' and elderly people have found themselves with not enough money to pay the other increased costs of living and have enough money left to buy adequate food. On top of this dilemma, the cold weather in areas that produce vegetables, seafood and other food stuffs have forced prices on these items sky high. Cabbage is a good example, Kerr, chief of the Food Assistance Section of the N.C. Division of Social Services, said.

According to Kerr, this dilemma has caused an influx in food stamp applicants at many county social services departments across the state. Many of these people had never applied before for food stamps.

Ronald Huffman, the Chowan County Director of Social Services, said that the food stamp program helps people get more food for less money. Based on their income if they are determined eligible, they pay a certain amount for the food stamps and receive an additional amount of free stamps. The lower the income, the less they pay and the more free stamps they receive.

Food stamps are like money in that they can be spent at most grocery stores throughout the county to purchase food.

Huffman urges anyone in the county that needs help in stretching their food dollar in order to have an adequate diet to contact the Social Services Department to see if they are eligible; telephone 482-7441.

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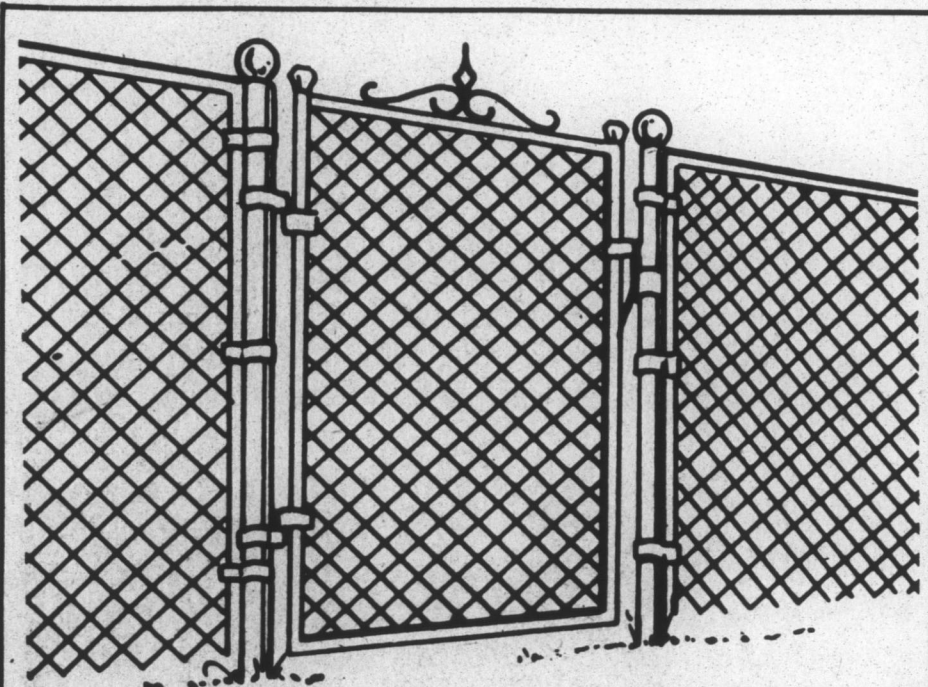
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