

NCSU Study Examines Role Of Courthouse

By GLORIA JONES
The courthouse has traditionally served as a hub of legal governmental and political activity in a county, reflecting events which become the history of a place.

The courthouse touches every life.

When you're born and when you die, the events are recorded at the courthouse. When you buy or sell property, it goes on record at the courthouse.

You may serve on the jury at the courthouse, or become involved in court proceedings.

Without conscious effort, you become a part of the courthouse and of history.

Out of the past to modern days, many North Carolina courthouses reveal a sense of time and place, preserving the character of the past.

Some have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and others are approved for study for possible inclusion on the Register.

Still others are noteworthy because they are part of a county's historic district.

North Carolina would seem to be filled with historic courthouses, most still in use.

A study undertaken at the School of Design at N.C. State University shows that in the 100 counties in the state, 13 courthouses are more than 100 years old and scores are more than 50 years old.

Part of the study examines the historic and architectural role played by the courthouse as a setting for important historical events and as a focus of the urban townscape.

When completed later this year, the study will include a county by county view of facilities inventories and needs, assessment of existing facilities and future requirements, and strategies for implementing recommendations.

Sponsored jointly by the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts and the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, the project is being conducted under the direction of Robert Burns and John Tector of the School of Design, under grants totaling almost \$130,000 from the federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

The state's oldest courthouse has served Chowan County more than 200 years, since 1767. Formally situated at the end of Edenton's town green, the historic structure is an outstanding example of Colonial American architecture.

Significant because of its association with the Colonial and Revolutionary periods of American history, the Chowan County Courthouse is considered one of the finest examples of a Colonial courthouse in America.

Various artifacts of the past, such as the original judge's seat and logbook have been preserved.

The courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places and is also designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Beaufort County boasts the state's second oldest courthouse. Almost 200 years old, the courthouse in Washington was built about 1786, a neo-classical structure with a richly detailed entrance.

More than 100 years old, the courthouse in Hertford has served Perquimans County since 1825. The NCSU study indicates that the building with its sensitive additions, comprises a handsome and efficient unit between two of Hertford's main streets.

The structure is of particular interest for its fine brick columns and other use of this native material.

Historical Granville County Courthouse was built in 1835 and renovated in 1935. A handsome Colonial building on the main street



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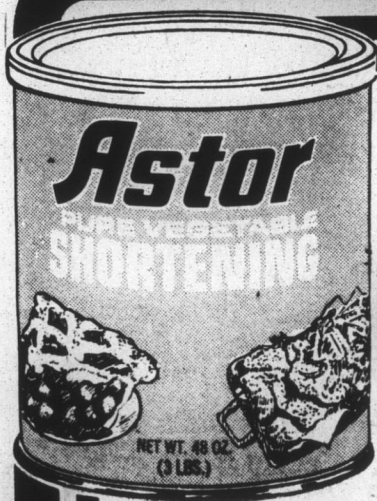
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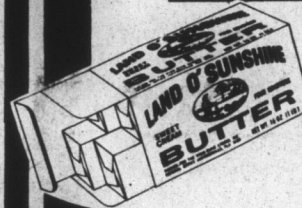
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