HYDE COUNTY'S GLORIOUS HISTORY LOST AMID RUSH OF RAPIDLY MOVING FUTURE

A Region Vast and Different That Had Its Earliest Beginninge Before the Revolution; In Colonial Days a Region of Riches, In Modern Days the Smokehouse and Granary of the Southern Albemarle

By LETA BERRY BROWN
Swan Quarter, N. C.

The many facts which could have been put into history about Hyde County have been lost by the passing of Time. No record has been made. The facts are gathered only from the old people which was handed down to them through several generations. It is regretted that our fore-parents failed to write the many incidents of the old days which would be very interesting to the present and future generations

Hyde County was one of the original precincts of North Carolina and existed previous to 1729, when the Lords Proprietors surrendered their rights to the crown. It was called in honor of Edward Hyde, who was governor of the colony It is situated in the extreme eastern part of the State, and its present boundaries are the Long Shoal River, the Alligator River and Tyrrell County on the North, the Atlantic Ocean and Pamlico Sound on the South, Pamlico Sound on the East and the Pungo River on the West.

The original division of the colony of Carolina was into the two counties of Albemarle and Clarendon; the former contained the settlements around Albemarle Sound the latter that of the Cape Fear There were then no settlement between the two localities. As people began to move South from Albemarle and settle the Pamlico country, Bath County was created. The present territory of Hyde County was included in Bath County

In 1705, the population still increasing, it became necessary to divide Bath County into three precincts—Pamptecough, lying on the north side of Pamptecough River and beginning at Mill Creek, and thence westerly to the head of the river; Wickham, beginning at Molines Creek, so including all the lands and rivers from that creek to Matchenungo Bluff; Archdale, taking in all the south side of the Pamptecough River, and including all the inhabitants along the Neuse River Molines Creek was the old name for Bath Creek.

It appears that Wickham precinct, afterwards Hyde precinct took in that extent of country bounded by the southern line of Albemarle County on the north, Pamlico Sound on the east and [illegible] and Moines, or Bath Creek on the west It included the northeastern portion of the present Beaufort County and all of the present Hyde County, with the exception of Ocracoke Island.

In 1711 the name of Wickham precinct was changed to Hyde precinct in honor of the Colonial Governor who was a cousin of Queen Anne Dr Kemp P Battle of the University of North Carolina says that it is not known who Wickham was, for whom the precinct was named.

Bath town, situated on Molines Creek the oldest town in the state and for five years in the Colonial days the seat of Government was [illegible] in the old Hyde precinct It does not clearly appear [illegible] dividing line between the precincts of Hyde and Beaufort was established

Prior to 1723 all the precincts of Bath County attended court at Bath In that year the Legislature [illegible] Edenton [illegible] three precincts [illegible] public buildings It was thought that one locality would suffice for Hyde and Beaufort This was at Bath

Split From Beaufort in 1728

In 1728 the Lords Proprietors separated Hyde and Beaufort in their court system, as will be seen from the following: "The last Assembly that ever convened in Carolina under the government of the Lords Proprietors met at Edenton on the 27 of November 1728 This body separated the precincts of Hyde and Beaufort in their court system and directed a court house to be built in the former county where Woodstock now stands Hyde county's first seat of government was situated at Woodstock now in Beaufort County It is no known how long it remained there From there it was taken to Germantown Afterwards it was for a time located at It was removed in 1836 to Swan Quarter, its present location

In 1758 Albemarle and Bath counties were abolished and each precinct of the county made a county We find then that in 1723 Hyde precinct was made a county, and in point of age, excepting Albemarle Bath and Clarendon, which were then abolished, is as old as any county in the State.

Until 1745 Mattamuskeet Lake and the country around was separate from Hyde County and probably was a part of Currituck county The inhabitant of Mattamuskeet and the lake, had for many years past been obliged to attend Currituck County court which was about one hundred miles away The journey was through a bleak and dangerous sound which was always attended with great danger and oftentimes great loss

Mattamuskeet Lake a Problem

The following was enacted in 1745 "That Mattamuskeet and Lake thereunto belonging shall from henceforth be accounted taken reckoned and deemed part of Hyde county and that the inhabitants shall be subject to the same duties and taxes as any other of the inhabitants of the said county

It was enacted by the General Assembly in 1784 that commissioners be appointed for the counties of Hyde and Tyrrell and they shall meet on the first day of December 1785 and proceed to run the dividing line between Hyde and Tyrrell counties

In 1819 the General Assembly ca[illegible] part of Hyde county west of the Pungo River to Beaufort county as follows

An Act to attach part of Hyde county to Beaufort county Passed in the year 1819 "

Be it enacted that all that part of the county of Hyde, which lies upon the west side of Pungo River, and it is hereby added to and made a part of the county of Beaufort "

Again in 1823 another slice of Currituck was added to Hyde by the following Act of Assembly

"An Act to add a part of Currituck county to Hyde county passed in the year 1823

Be it enacted that all that part of Currituck county which lies south of New Inlet, be, and the same is henceforth added to the county of Hyde "

The last time any part of the territory of Hyde county was taken away was in 1870, when all that part of the banks or barrier reefs, lying between the sound and the ocean, beginning at Hatteras Inlet and extending to New Inlet, was by act of Assembly made a part of Dare This act left nothing of the Banks to Hyde, except Ocracoke Island, which lies between Hatteras and Ocracoke Inlets. This island is 18 miles long and one mile wide. These banks formed a part of Currituck county and were afterwards given to Hyde, and taken from Hyde to give to Dare

It is evident that the early settlers of Carolina, about the Albemarle and Pamlico country, were English and French Hugenots. The Hugenots had come hither to avoid religious persecutions at home We are unable to ascertain the precise date when the first settlers made their home in what is now Hyde county. It is probable that Hyde county, then a part of Bath precinct was settled about the time or very soon after Albemarle county, which seems to have been first but how much sooner is not known

As early as 1656, very considerable settlements had been formed from Virginia on the northern side of Albemarle Sound Many of the settlements who obtained homes on the borders of Mattamuskeet Lake no doubt came from Accomack and Northampton counties of Virginia, as many of the citizens of those counties are of the same names as those of Hyde county.

It is thought that prior to and during the Revolutionary War the British in many ways molested the people on the Eastern shore of Virginia, particularly the counties of Accomack and Northampton, and so much so that many of them left and came through what was then the dense forest and settled in Hyde count , so as to be out of reach of the depredations of the British I do not claim that we have Cavalier blood or descendants of a Royalist baronet, in Hyde county, but we have some of a good stock as ever came from the British Isles and settled on the soil of Virginia Educational training has been neglected in some instances, but notwithstanding this, there are many with cultivated tastes of force and energy.

Three Tribes of Indians

The first settlers found the county, now Hyde county, inhabited by three tribes of Indians; The Cores, Cechneys and Mattamuskeets These were fierce and warlike They took a part in the Tuscarora war and were the last [illegible] brought under subjection and with whom terms of peace were arranged. They lived principally in that part of Hyde about Mattamuskeet Lake.

Our ancestors brought with them from the mother country principally the worship of the established church of England, the Episcopal religion This religion, however, was not obligatory. Indeed, we regret to note, that of religion there was but little of any kind in the colonies prior to 1708, except among the Quakers, over in the Chowan and Perquimans country

Among the laws the one in regard to religion was that the Church of England was declared to be the only established church in Carolina, and the province was to be divided into nine parishes. Chowan precinct was to contain two, separated from each other by Albemarle Sound and Chowan River, and to be known as the eastern parish, and the southeast parish and southwest parish of Pasquotank, separated by the Pasquotank River, Perquimans, Currituck and Hyde precincts each formed a parish, having for their limits the boundaries of their precincts.

The early inhabitants of North Carolina were divided into different classes; the educated set, who were generally allied to families of rank in England; the set who had managed by shrewdness,

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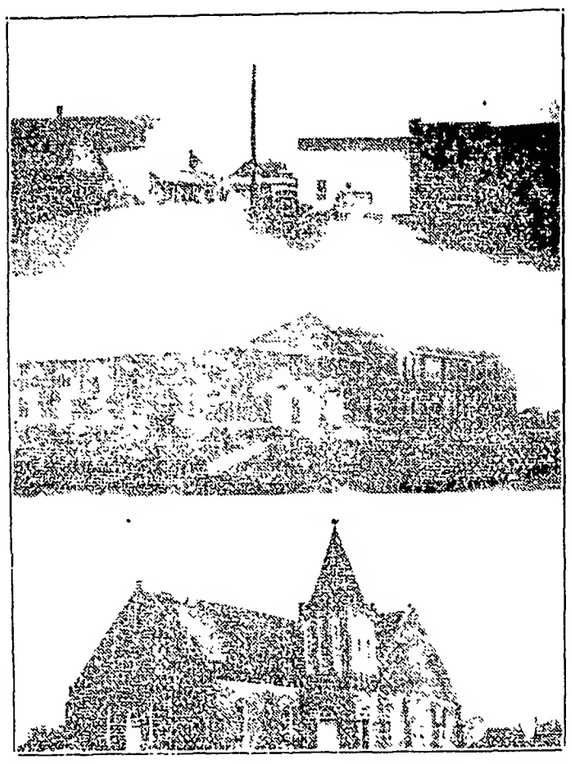
ONE OF THE BIG BOYS IN HYDE COUNTY

CLOSS GIBBS is one of Hyde County's outstanding citizens. He is a levelheaded, conservative business man whose wise judgment has figured in the development of this section for many years. He is a farmer who devotes much time [illegible] farms and mercantile business Some of his neighbors say he is the richest man in Hyde County, but whether or no, he is a substantial citizen, who has a definite place in that county He is prominent in the affairs of the successful Engelhard Banking and Trust Company and operates the largest store in Engelhard.

Engelhard Is Becoming a Live Wire Town



THE TOP PICTURE [illegible] business district with the brick building of the Engelhard Banking and Trust Company in the foreground, the Mattamuskeet Theatre and Closs Gibbs store The middle picture shows the planned high school building with auditorium at Engelhard, one of the finest in Eastern North Carolina The bottom picture shows the Methodist church. Brick is being used extensively in this community for homes as well as public buildings.

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