

## 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

## The Future

In 2012, the Friends resolved to utilize the Courthouse as the hub for the creation of an arts and crafts learning center and a gallery exhibiting the work of local and regional artists. The vision is that the school will expand throughout the village of Swan Quarter with resident art studios and additional teaching studios as other artists relocate temporarily or permanently to teach, learn, and work.

The name *MATTIE* is an acronym for Mattamuskeet Artisans – Teaching, Training, Instructing, and Educating. It is a tribute to the county's renowned Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge and its signature lake. Wintering habitat for more than a hundred thousand migratory waterfowl including tundra swans and snow geese, the refuge is an artists' Mecca.

For upcoming art class offerings or to be included in our email data base, visit:

[www.hyde1854courthouse.org](http://www.hyde1854courthouse.org)  
or contact Judy McLawhorn  
at 252-943-8991 or  
[info@hyde1854courthouse.org](mailto:info@hyde1854courthouse.org)



## Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse

Introducing *MATTIE*, an arts learning center dedicated to creating a venue where artists can grow artistically in their craft, communicate creatively with one another, and be inspired by nature.

Mail: P. O. Box 54  
10 Oyster Creek Road  
Swan Quarter, NC 27885

Ph: 252-926-1171

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# Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse

A new nonprofit organization, Friends of Hyde County's Historic 1854 Courthouse, was organized in 2010 by local supporters of Hyde County's old courthouse. The courthouse 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, so 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 (later replaced by Dick Tunnell) to serve on the Historic Courthouse Oversight Committee. That committee, along with Hyde County Planner/Developer Alice Keeney (now retired),

worked with the Swan Quarter Service Group and others to study the feasibility of renovating and operating the historic courthouse.

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 Bell

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2012

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## Hyde Historic Courthouse History

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. The Friends History Committee sorted out discrepancies regarding the date this courthouse was actually completed and found court records attesting to the fact that the first court session was actually held November 5, 1838, not 1854! This makes our courthouse the 8th oldest surviving courthouse in NC.

It is said that Hyde County's courthouse is one of the few surviving antebellum courthouses in the state of North Carolina; however, after additions were built in 1892 and 1909, it seems to have more of a Victorian rather than an antebellum character.

Placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the courthouse in this rural northeastern North



Surviving Victorian stand from earlier Courtroom & ledgers

Carolina coastal village has withstood many hurricanes and salt water intrusions. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel led to the building being abandoned. The original structure was saved from demolition but attached 1960s 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 county's 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 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.***