

REPORT ON THE HALIFAX AND QUANKEY CREEK AREA

BY

C. G. MACKINTOSH, INSPECTOR

AND

RAYMOND SYDANSK, ASST. STATE SUPERVISOR

REPORT ON HALIFAX, NORTH CAROLINA

AND THE QUANKEY CREEK AREA

BY

INSPECTOR C. G. MACKINTOSH

AND

ASSISTANT STATE SUPERVISOR, R. SYDANSK

JUNE 6, 1938.

INTRODUCTION

Reference should be made to the following correspondence:

| <u>From</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>To</u> | <u>Title</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|-----------------|---|------------------|---|-------------|
| Mrs. Gary | Chairman, Woman's Club | Hon. H. W. Ickes | Secretary of the Interior | 4/4/38 |
| John H. Kerr | Congressman | A. B. Cammerer | Director | 4/9/38 |
| R. B. House | Dean of Administration, University of N. C. | Hon. H. W. Ickes | Secretary of the Interior | 4/11/38 |
| A. E. Demaray | Acting Director | John H. Kerr | Congressman | 4/15/38 |
| Fred T. Johnson | Acting Asst. Director | Mrs. Gary, Chrm. | Woman's Club | 4/16/38 |
| John H. Kerr | Congressman | C. P. Russell | Regional Director | 4/18/38 |
| A. E. Demaray | Acting Director | R. B. House | Dean of Administration University of N. C. | 4/20/38 |
| A. P. Bursley | Regional Supervisor | R. Sydansky | Asst. State Supervisor | 4/20/38 |
| C. P. Russell | Regional Director | John H. Kerr | Congressman | 4/27/38 |
| A. P. Bursley | Regional Supervisor | C. G. Mackintosh | Inspector | 4/27/38 |
| A. B. Cammerer | Director | C. C. Crittenden | Secretary, North Carolina Historical Commission | 4/29/38 |
| Mrs. Gary | Chairman, Woman's Club | C. P. Russell | Regional Director | 4/30/38 |
| John H. Kerr | Congressman | C. P. Russell | Regional Director | 5/17/38 |
| C. P. Russell | Regional Director | Mrs. Gary, Chrm. | Woman's Club | 5/24/38 |
| C. P. Russell | Regional Director | John H. Kerr | Congressman | 5/24/38 |
| Mrs. Williamson | Pres., N. C. Society Colonial Dames of America | Hon. H. W. Ickes | Secretary of the Interior | ---- |
| A. E. Demaray | Acting Director | Mrs. Williamson | President, North Carolina Society Colonial Dames of America | 5/26/38 |
| A. P. Bursley | Regional Supervisor | R. Sydansky | Asst. State Supervisor | 5/27/38 |
| A. P. Bursley | Regional Supervisor | R. Sydansky | Asst. State Supervisor | 6/1/38 |
| Conrad L. Wirth | Assistant Director | Mrs. Gary, Chrm. | Woman's Club | 6/8/38 |
| Mrs. Gary | Chairman, Woman's Club | C. P. Russell | Regional Director | 5/27/38 |

Halifax, N. C.

On June 6, 1938, Inspector C. G. Mackintosh and Assistant State Supervisor R. Sydansk met the following at Halifax, North Carolina, for the purpose of investigating the recreational merits of the Halifax and Quankey Creek Areas:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mrs. S. M. Gary | All Woman's Club |
| Mrs. R. L. Applewhite | County Federation of Women |
| Mrs. J. H. Fenner | United Daughters of Confederacy |
| Mrs. M. G. White | Woman's Club |
| Mr. Hugh House | Town Commissioner |
| Mr. C. E. Shaw | Town Commissioner |

DISCUSSION

On the basis of this investigation a Recreation Study Form No. 4 has been filled out to insure consideration of the area in the development of the long range State plan. Certain historical structures, however, appear to the writers to warrant investigation by representatives of the Regional Office historical staff. These structures are elements of the old town of Halifax where the North Carolina Resolves were written. These resolves were the State's Declaration of Independence written on April 12, 1776.

On the east side of the town there are still standing two brick buildings (see pictures) which are reported to be existing remains of the old town and which show on an original colonial map by C. J. Southier 1769, now hanging in the Courthouse. These buildings are, namely, the old Jail and the old Clerk of the Court's building and are in fair state of repair. The Courthouse which stood beside the Clerk's building and in front of the Jail has burned down. Across the road from the two buildings is the old cemetery in which the majority of the gravestones bear dates in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Buried here is Confederate General Daniels. A magnificent large oak of approximately four feet diameter breast high stands within the confines of the cemetery. Behind the cemetery is the old Magazine Spring. This spring was reportedly rock encased in Colonial times. The rock casing and hollow stone spout are still in place as shown in the very old picture, except that the iron door is gone and the entire casing is covered by a wooden shack. This is called Magazine Spring because of its historical association with wartime powder magazines, the details of which would have to be clarified by an historian. The spring and the cemetery are now in public ownership. The Jail and Clerk of the Court's building could be acquired at very little, if any, cost.

Very close to the historical buildings mentioned above is the Halifax Masonic Lodge, first used in 1764. It is claimed that this is the first chartered Masonic Lodge in America (chartered from England) and that

it is the oldest Masonic Lodge Building in use in the United States. Buried in the yard is Joseph Montford, first and only Grand Master of Masons in America. It appears to the writers that the protection and restoration of this site would probably be the natural responsibility of the Masonic Lodge of America.

All of the above historical factors are included in the pictures accompanying this report and are cited in the additional historical notes.

Although Quankey Creek ravines are very pretty and picturesque, it is doubted if their attraction is more than local. The ravines proper may be acquired at little or no cost for recreational development. Nothing other than trails could be put in them, however, because periodical high waters as observed from high water marks on tree trunks rise 10 feet or more. The general cost of the flat agricultural land at the top of the ravine, on which intensive developments would have to be placed, is approximately \$50.00 per acre.

U. S. Route 301 is one of North Carolina's principal north-south tourist highways and crosses Quankey Creek ravine at Halifax. This makes the site a most advantageous one for a highway Wayside Park. Consideration will be given this possibility at the proper time by the staff of the Recreation Study.

The Halifax County Commissioners stated that plenty of local WPA labor was available and that it could probably be secured for any development work contemplated.

The escorting party stated they believed that they could secure donations of any of the land necessary for contemplated inclusion in a project should it take concrete form. Some of the old buildings are now negro property and could be purchased at a nominal sum. Quankey Creek banks are useless for agricultural purposes and could probably be donated outright.

CONCLUSION

(1) The Quankey Creek Ravine, although an outstanding bit of beauty and possessing attractive scenic features, is not of National or State calibre.

(2) Some of the historical features of Halifax have possibilities of being rather important links in the chain of American history.

(3) The upper section of the Quankey Creek Ravine near where it is crossed by U. S. Route 301, has possibilities for use as a highway Wayside, County Park or Recreational Area.

(4) Portions of the area, if developed as an historic site, might

Halifax, N. C.

(1) provide a well worthwhile additional link in the continuity of the revolutionary actions of Cornwallis' Army, (2) properly carry on the growing American tendency toward the conservation of historic resources, (3) serve, by being on well-traveled U. S. Highway 301, as a point of interest and good feeder for people to visit more isolated and completely developed areas, and (4) be a focal point in or adjacent to a Wayside or County Park.

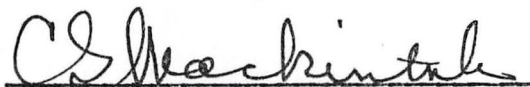
(5) Immediate attention is desirable because if the area is not of sufficient importance for consideration as a National Monument or historic site and is so considered from a State standpoint, it is possible that enabling legislation might be desirable at the next biennial legislative session which commences January 1939.

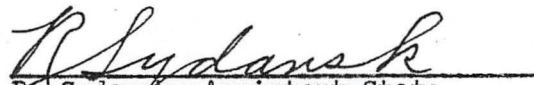
(6) From a preliminary investigation, without research or technical assistance, it seems that a small National or State historical area of possibly ten to fifteen acres might be restored and developed which would include a portion of the old town established in 1757, on which would be located an old hotel, a Clerk of the Court's office, a jail, magazine spring, cemetery and other features. Adjacent to this tract possibly could be located a Wayside or County Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS

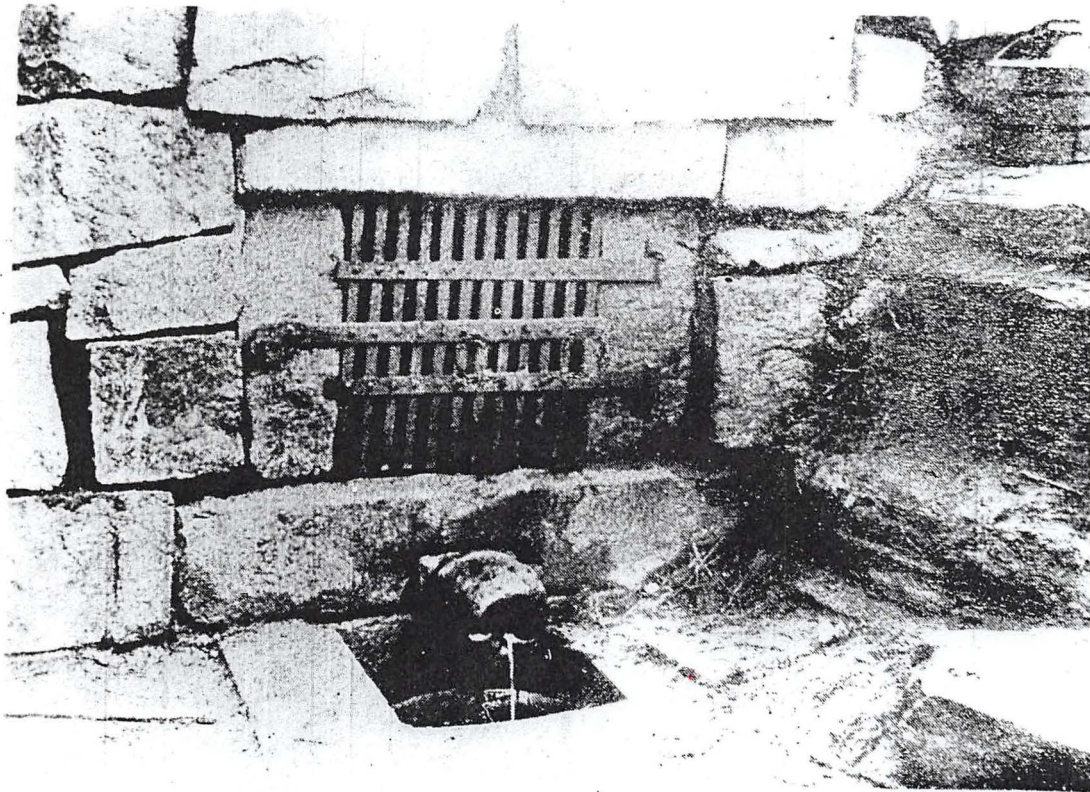
In order that proper consideration may be given to this area as a Unit, it is recommended that a complete and accurate historical appraisal be made of the features and their records, possibly in connection with the Historic Sites Study, to determine their possible justification for consideration as a National Monument or Historical Area. The staff of the Recreation Study will consider the area according to the findings of the historians, and will withhold all further consideration pending their investigation.

Respectfully submitted,


C. G. Mackintosh, Inspector.


R. Sydansk, Assistant State
Supervisor.

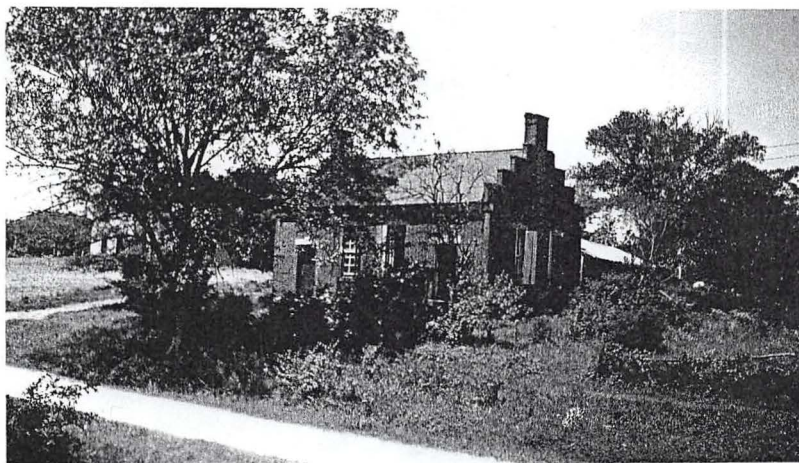
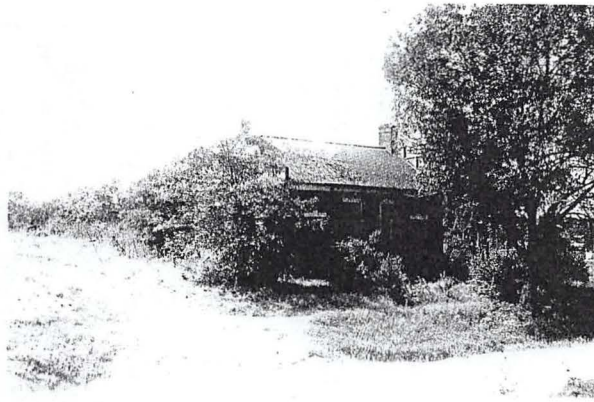
Halifax, N. C.



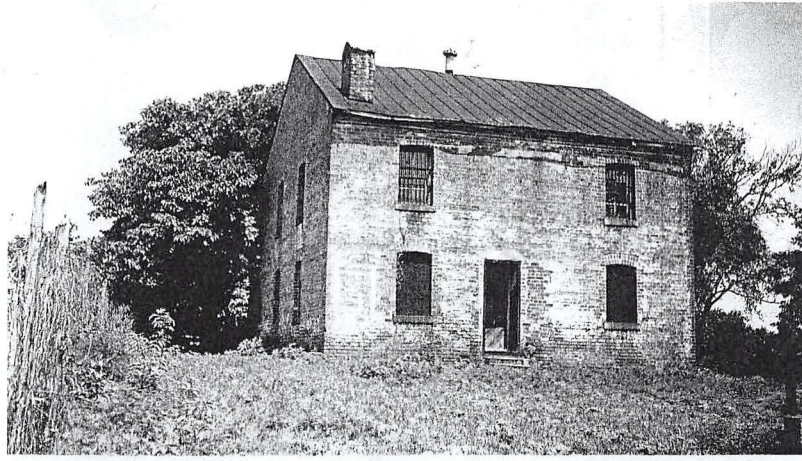
Old Magazine Spring

Iron door has been removed but balance
of structure appears to be intact.

Halifax, N. C.



Old Clerk of Court's Building
(Portion now used for colored dwelling)

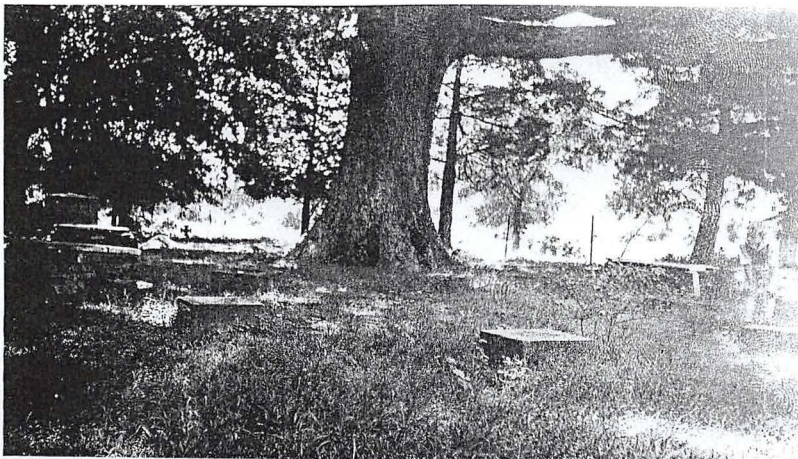


Old Jail
(Building now idle)

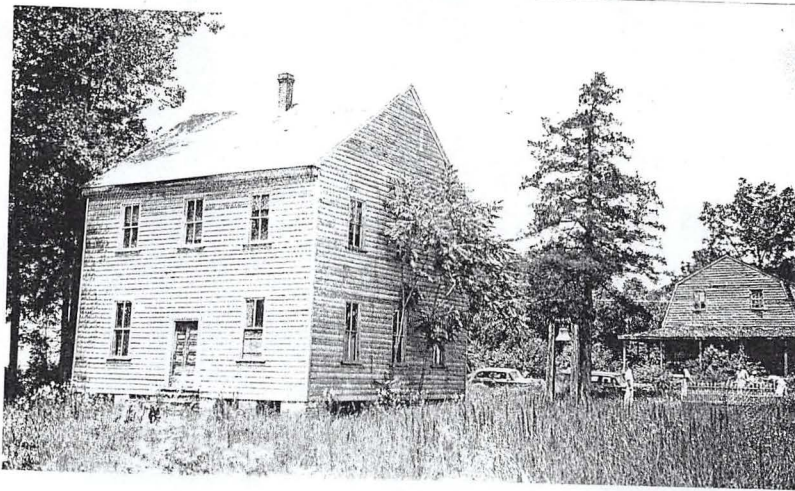
Old Cemetery

Located across road from Jail
and Clerk of Court's Building.

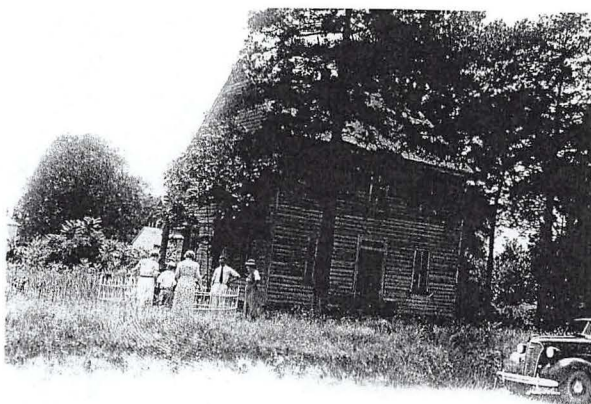
In lower picture note foundation
piers of old Church of England in
circle in front of large oak.



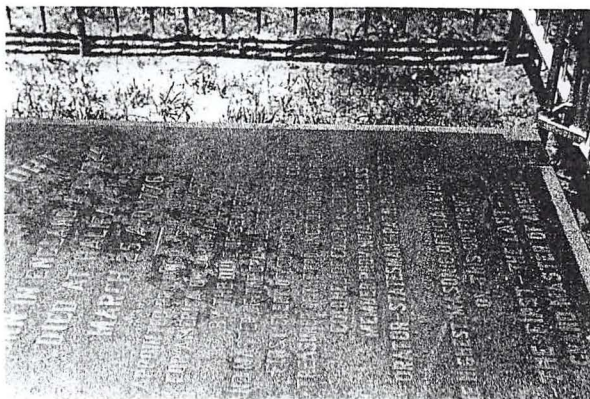
Halifax, N. C.



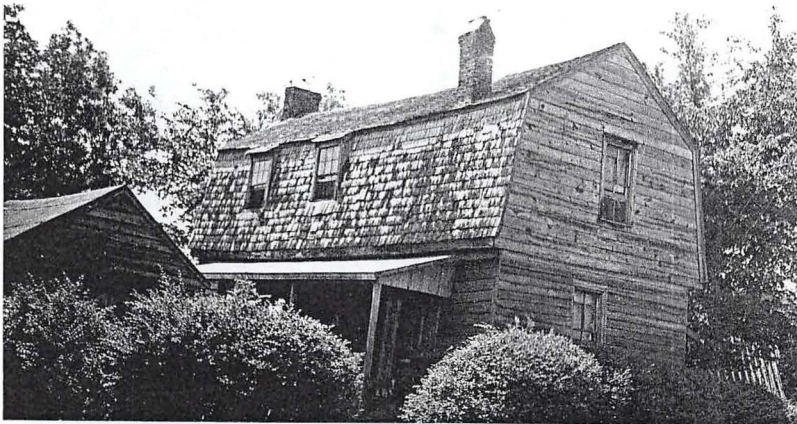
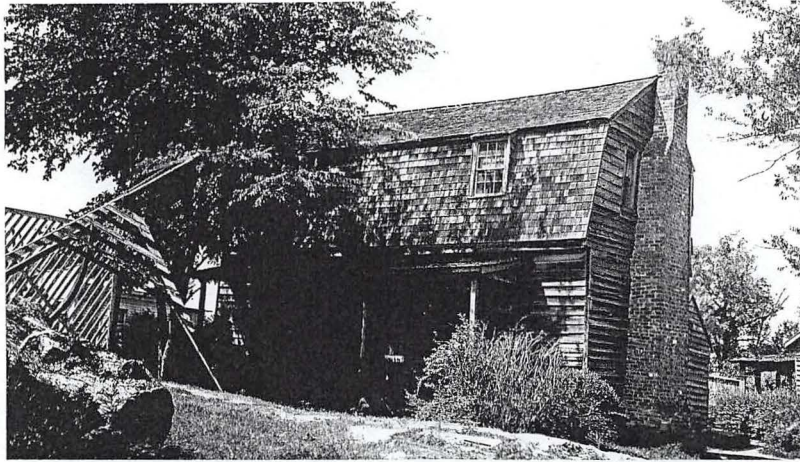
Halifax Masonic Lodge



People in foreground are looking at the
grave of Joseph Montford, first and
only Grand Master of Amer-
ica

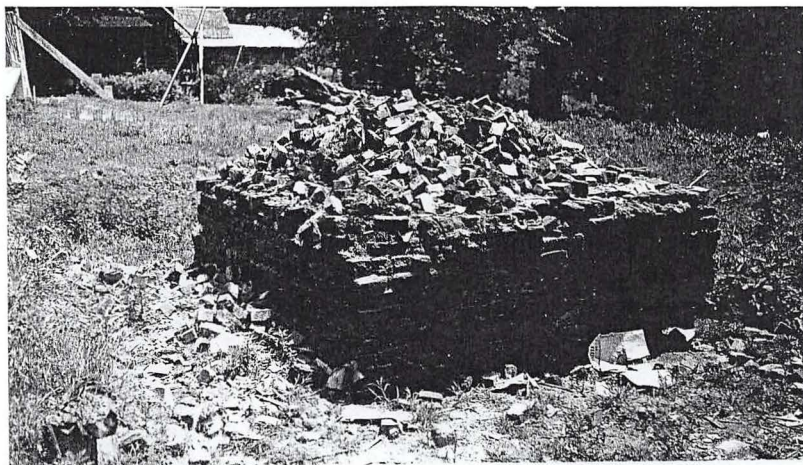


Portion of Slab
Joseph Montford's Grave

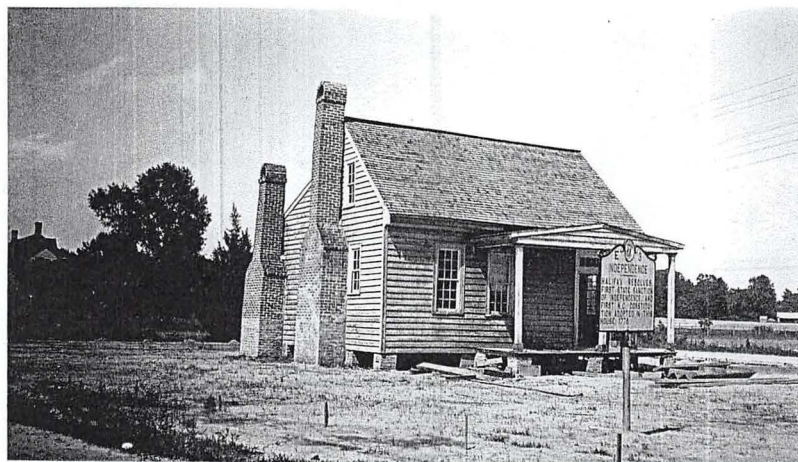


Possible old Hotel or "Eagle Tavern"
or the "Sign of the Thistle" (not far from Jail)

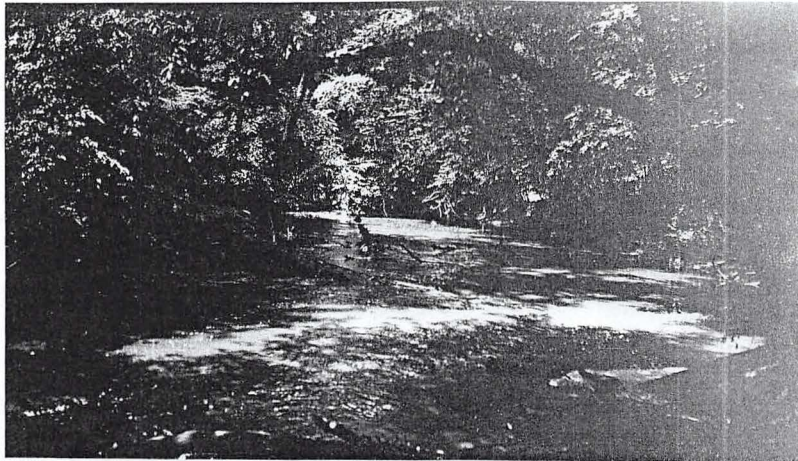
Halifax, N. C.



Possible Chimney to Hall where
"Resolves" were enacted



Grove House



Typical views along Quankey Creek

Halifax, N. C.

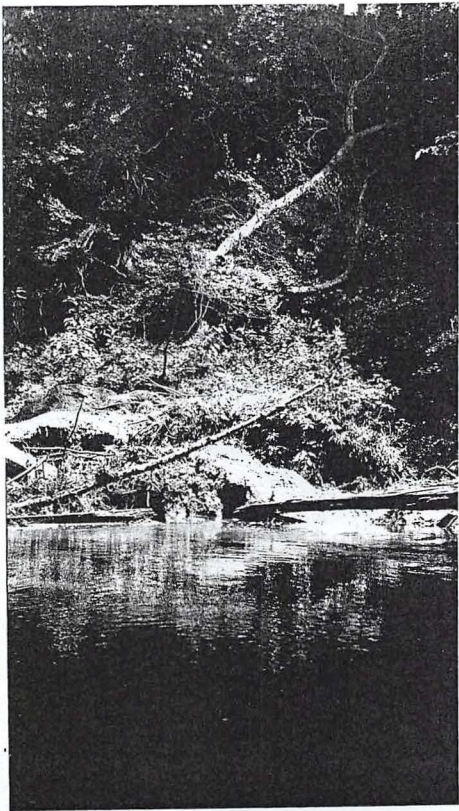


Mountainous
terrain
and
vegetation

Hardwood
at
old swimming
hole



Halifax, N. C.
-12-



Quankey Creek

Top of Bank

about

90'

above

water

level

US 301

Possible entrance

road take off or portal



Halifax, N. C.

-13-

PORTIONS OF HISTORY OF HALIFAX, N. C.
(As given Inspector, and study with no attempt
at corroboration)

There is in Halifax, N. C., and vicinity apparently a wealth of history pertaining to American Indian, English Colonists and Church of England, Revolution, Declaration of Independence, Formation of State Constitution, Masonic Lodge, Civil War, and residences or birthplaces of famous men.

George Washington, while president, spent the night at Eagle Tavern in Halifax, N. C., April 16, 1791. Lafayette spent the night there in 1824. It was the home of Wiley Jones, the most powerful man in the State politically about 1767, who induced John Paul to add the name of Jones and who used influence to secure commission in the first U. S. Navy. It was the home of the father of the University of North Carolina, oldest landgrant college in America, William R. Davie, whose home still stands. Joseph Montfort was the first clerk of court and otherwise distinguished himself.

Some buildings which may be of historic interest standing today, few in a very good state of preservation are:

- Possible old hotel
- Jail
- Printing office or Clerk of Court office.
- Foundation of Church of England
- Chimney to a famous hall
- Magazine spring
- Grove House
- Masonic Lodge building
- Home of William R. Davie.

The Governor offered the name of Halifax, in honor of Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, the President of the British Board of Trade, and Enfield was designated as the County Seat in 1758. Later, Enfield was rejected, because it was too far from the center of the new county and the village of Halifax was chosen instead. The county of Halifax came into existence with much ease, the parish of Edgecombe becoming Halifax and the parish of St. Mary's becoming Edgecombe. There were several families living on Quankey Creek, near where it empties into the Roanoke river, as early as 1741. In the year 1757, by act of the Colonial Assembly, one hundred acres of land were purchased from James Leslie at the price of 150 pounds and vested in a board of trustees to sell off as town lots, the proceeds of the sale to go toward paying Leslie for the land, to build a bridge over Quankey Creek and the surplus to go for town improvements and four acres of land were reserved for municipal buildings.

Halifax has the honor of being the birthplace of our State Constitution in December, 1776, and of our National freedom on April 12, 1776, for on that day the Halifax Resolves were written. With a British fleet lying in North Carolina waters the Halifax Convention in April 1776 voted for final separation from England and directed the North Carolina members of the Continental

Congress to vote for separation. Halifax is the first place in North Carolina where the Declaration of Independence, declared at Philadelphia July 4th, was first celebrated.

One of the oldest and most famous institutions in the county is the masonic lodge in Halifax. The first masonic meeting was held April 20, 1764, in the home of David London, Halifax Town, Province of North Carolina. From 1764 to 1772 and again from 1783 to the present time, there is an unbroken record of these meetings, but all records are missing from 1772 to 1783. It is believed that those records were taken home by a member for safe-keeping and lost to history.

On the morning of the 4th of May, 1781, Col. Tarleton, at the head of 200 British Dragoons, crossed Quankey Stream and entered Halifax. They rode down Broadway or King Street, the main street of Halifax, until they came to the Eagle Tavern, or Sign of The Thistle, where they halted and Tarleton and his aides went into the tavern and secured rooms for Lord Cornwallis and his retinue. Again mounting, they rode back the way they had come to meet Cornwallis and his army. The town was completely occupied by the afternoon and nearly 4,000 British soldiers were encamped in and around Halifax, Cornwallis and his officers finally being quartered at "The Grove", home of Willie Jones. After a week at Halifax, resting and foraging the whole countryside for supplies and food, the British left Halifax, crossing the Roanoke at Halifax and going into Northampton County and Greensville County, through Hicks Ford (now Emporia, Va.) to Petersburg. Stedman, the historian who was with the British during the occupation of Halifax, records the fact that the foraging parties of the British were guilty of crimes that were a disgrace to the name of man. Tarleton, in his "Campaign in the Southern Provinces of North America" states that a sergeant and a dragoon were executed at Halifax for rape and robbery.

The old clerk's office for the first colonial courthouse is still standing, the office afterward being used by Abraham Hodge and used by Joseph Montfort before the Revolution. The old jail still stands in which Allen McDonald, the husband of Flora McDonald was confined with his brother Gen. Donald McDonald after the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. They were detained in Halifax with other Tory prisoners for nearly two months. The celebrated Flora McDonald spent some of that time in Halifax in the interest of her husband, Allen McDonald. It is said that she exhausted her means in effecting his release.

The Provincial Congress which met in Halifax in April 1776 was the fourth meeting of the people in a representative capacity opposed to the Royal Government in North Carolina.

The State Constitution was adopted by the Provincial Congress on December 18, 1776. In the records of the meeting of this convention several orders were entered relative to a magazine for the storage of ammunition.

for the State troops. This magazine was located in the town of Halifax near the old spring of that name. From this magazine supplies were sent to our troops in Eastern North Carolina. In old papers "Old Magazine Spring" is described as "a beautiful spring of water coming out of a hillside, and caught in a large rock, hollowed out to form a basin for the water". It is said that this spring was used by the Tuscarora Indians long before Halifax became a village.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

CWP 8/2
July 27, 1938.

The Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Branch of Recreational Planning
and State Cooperation

Dear Sir:

*Halifax &
Quamkey Creek
Of local importance only as I
see it - CWP 8/2*

Reference is made to a rather extensive file of correspondence between our Service (Washington Office) and various interested individuals in North Carolina with regard to the Quamkey Creek Area in that State. In particular, attention is indicated to Assistant Director Wirth's letter of June 8, 1938, to Mrs. Sterling M. Gary of Halifax, North Carolina.

We are attaching for your complete information in this connection two copies of a report on this area, dated June 6, and submitted by Inspector C. G. Mackintosh and Assistant State Supervisor Raymond Sydensak, who made a joint investigation of this area.

In order that he may be thoroughly advised in this connection, we have placed a complete copy of the report in the hands of Mr. R. E. Appelman, Acting Regional Historian.

Sincerely yours,

Carl P. Russell,
Regional Director.

By

A. P. Bursley,
Regional Supervisor,
Recreation Study.

Enclosure 1531195

cc: The Director

Mr. Sydensak

Mr. Appelman - with copy of report

File with our copy Halifax City Report

Suggesting for Military, Historical
and Recreational Park at Halifax N.C.
mark beginning of Confederate Artifica-
tions near center on Highway 801.

Put two markers for Confederate Navy
yard, one on spot on river bank
one at intersection of Highway 113 & Prus-
sia Street.

Take over jail, Colonial Clerk's Office
& top room of old Tavern. Put on
Courthouse square a memorial,
form of a circular, or square pavilion
using the pillars ⁽⁴⁾ of old Courthouse
now stored with Mrs. Wm Sloan in Nor-
folk, Va, and marking around
top of it, "Provincial Congress, Halifax
Resolves Apr. 12, 1776. Restore Colonial
Clerk's Office for Museum of Colonial
and Confederate memorials.

Restore old cemetery. Take over Park
around Magazine Spring, make
a swimming pool fed by spring with
out for town water if necessary.

Take over Quaker Barrens from Magazine
(over)

Spring to faces near Celsus and make a
park similar to one at Palatka Fla-
Run a CCC camp in Haleff to do
this work.

Provisional, at request of M. A. Perlelin.
Turn Constitution House to original of
and leave as it is.

Buy land + wife

Red - Brick Building
Halifax N. Carolina
Colonial Clerk's Office on
Original Courthouse

Charles

Peelers can be procured
Mrs. Hattie Gary, Met
Mrs. E. F. Williams - Joseph
Dickens, Mayor - Geo A. Hay

Loggins

Suggesting Park Halifax N.C.

R. L. Applewhite

Park Committee
Halifax Romanis Club

F. H. Gregory

Mrs. Sterling M. Gary Met
Mrs. R. L. Applewhite Met
Mrs. Reuben Gregory
Mrs. F. H. M. White

Miss Francis
McMahon