



THE MIRACLE OF HOPE PLANTATION Wayland L. Jenkins, Jr.

We believe in miracles, and you would too if you had been involved in the restoration of Hope, Governor David Stone's home. Perhaps it is not quite as dramatic as the miracles of old. But for modern times it rates rather high.

Efforts to acquire and restore Governor Stone's home began soon after the Bertie County Historical Association was organized in 1950. In the fall of 1964, the first successful attempt to acquire Hope was made. Mrs. Moses B. Gilliam, President of the Bertie Historical Association, greeted us as we arrived at her home, Rosefield. There was a certain excitement in the air that night. Representatives from the Historical Association and the Bertie County Development Association had come to discuss Hope and what joint effort could be made to acquire and restore the property. Conversation was lively.

The county was well represented geographically with Hampton Brett, Joe Cherry, Kenneth Slate, and Mrs. Gilliam from Windsor; Miss Stella Phelps was there from Lewiston; Jack Tyler and Tom Norfleet represented the Roxobel-Kelford area; Mrs. Wood Beasley came from Colerain; Mrs. Emmett Burden and Wayland L. Jenkins, Jr., were Aulander's representatives. The committee began negotiations with Dr. and Mrs. J. E. Smith of Windsor for the purchase of Hope and held regular monthly meetings, as well as invited other citizens to join in the venture.



Governor David Stone

After a series of meetings, we made application for and received, from the state of North Carolina, a charter in the name of Historic Hope Foundation, Incorporated. This instrument was dated February 2, 1965. With the aid of Steve Burch, who had joined the Steering Committee, by laws for Historic Hope Foundation were drawn. Members of the Steering Committee became the first Board of Directors as authorized by the bylaws.

The charter, and approval from the Internal Revenue Service, was our authority to accept contributions on a tax-exempt basis. We could now begin our campaign to raise funds.



These procedures and formalities had been previously pointed out to us by Mr. Sam Tarlton, an official of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. His advice and assistance were invaluable. He encouraged us to seek financial aid from the Smith-Richardson Foundation of Greensboro. An application was submitted in the Foundation's name.

On the local level, Hampton Brett was busy negotiating with Dr. and Mrs. Smith for the Hope property. It was a happy day when the Smiths agreed to sell the house and 18.12 acres of land to Historic Hope Foundation. A \$500 option was signed, and the Foundation had one year in which to purchase the property. The Foundation borrowed the \$500 option fee from the Bertie County Historical Association. The Foundation accepted the Smiths' offer to sell the property for \$25,000. Annual payments of \$5,000 less the option fee on the first installment, would be made for four years beginning in 1966. The final payment of \$5,000 would be returned to the Foundation in the form of a gift from the Smiths.

We were now ready to begin our campaign for funds. The call went out for people and money, and month after month, the organization and the coffers grew. More Windsor people came on the Board of Directors - Mrs. Walter Bond, Mrs. E. S. Pugh, Mrs. Ethel R. Cherry, Glenn Woodley, and Mrs. Peter Rascoe, Jr., Mrs. J. E. Smith, who for years had wanted to see Hope restored, actively associated herself with the Foundation. Francis Speight, the noted artist and Bertie County native, agreed to serve on the board. Mrs. H. O. White and Mrs. W. E. White of Colerain, and Mrs. Herbert Jenkins, Jr., of Aulander joined the group.

Hope Foundation's greatest incentive came in May of 1965 when the Richardson Foundation agreed to grant the Foundation \$5,000 if \$15,000 in matching funds could be raised. This sum of \$15,000 was an unheard of amount to be solicited locally. We went to work.

The Honorable Emmett Burden, our Representative to the 1965 North Carolina General Assembly, was requested to seek funds in our behalf. Senator J. J. Harrington from Lewiston worked with Representative Burden. A \$20,000 matching grant, on a dollar-for-dollar basis was appropriated during the next biennium for the Hope project.



Hope, circa 1950

To raise matching funds, a prison variety show was scheduled, Christmas cards and note paper were sold, directors went before civic groups telling the Hope story and asking for

their support. Foundation membership letters were written as were letters to hundreds of corporate foundations soliciting funds. Laura Harrell of the Bertie Ledger - Advance, and Jane Hall, art editor of the Raleigh News and Observer, added a new and needed dimension with outstanding press coverage. Governor Stone's descendants were told of the restoration plans and generous contributions were received from many of them, particularly, Mrs. Andrew A. Manning and her family of Spartanburg, South Carolina.

By December, 1965, the \$15,000 challenge grant was in hand. These funds would also make us eligible to receive the \$20,000 state grant. Our



first fund raising experience had been successful. Confidence was being built both within and without the organization. With this sum of \$40,000, we could at last begin work on Hope.

One of North Carolina's outstanding craftsman, an experienced restorationist, a true artist and specialist - W. M. Kemp of Hertford, North Carolina, was employed during the winter of 1966 to begin the restoration. Directed by John E. Tyler, Chairman of the Restoration Committee, with the assistance of A.L. Honeycutt, Jr., the devoted on-the-job representative from the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, each detail was carefully worked out, then executed so as to achieve maximum authenticity.

Also in 1966, the Foundation employed Mr. Richard W. Lobst, a professional historian, to research Hope Plantation and the Stone family. Later in the year, the directors selected the architectural firm of Edwards, Dove, and Knight of Rocky Mount, to make the necessary plans and designs that would be needed as restoration progressed. There were many decisions to be made, but fortunately we were guided by the experienced staff of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.

The year 1967 brought more good news, especially the announcement of another \$20,000 grant from the North Carolina General Assembly in sessions that year. This was a grant-in-aid, and outright appropriation with no matching fund requirement.

Shortly thereafter, the Richardson Foundation approved another \$5,000 grant, provided Hope Foundation could raise an additional \$15,000 before December 31, 1968. Where would this money come from? We could not go back to the local citizens for more contributions. These people had given generously and had supported us in every way. It was a reality, too, that Bertie

County was a poor county, by federal designation a poverty area. "Local participation, funding-wise, was simply exhausted. To survive and continue the restoration, outside help was vital.

The Governor Stone Ball was born out of this great need for funds and for out-of-county help. The Ball was our only "hope" — a gamble, yes but a great potential as a money-maker if it could be staged successfully. One faction of the Board of Directors argued for a large orchestra, pre-ball parties, a champagne breakfast, handsome invitations, exquisite decorations, and formal dress. Some said, "Formal dress? Black tie? You all must be out of your minds. Who in Bertie County owns a tuxedo, and who would come anyway and pay \$25 a couple to something that formal?" Fortunately the "ayes" out-voted the opposition. Mrs. Wood Beasley of Colerain agreed to serve as Ball Chairman. The ball proved to be a tremendous success. Those in attendance on Friday night, February 23, 1968, knew how successful it was. All of the directors knew, too, when Mrs. Beasley announced that \$6,500 had been netted as a result of the evening.

Another important idea came to fruition during this same period. After realizing the great need for support outside Bertie County, the Foundation directed its attention to the formation of a "Friends of Historic Hope" committee. This group of fifty distinguished citizens would be representative of all North Carolina. Their purpose would be to bring state and national recognition to the importance, both historically and architecturally, of the Hope restoration to make suggestions and give advice for perfecting the total development of Hope; to assist in the location of donors and contributors for the many acquisitions necessary for furnishing the mansion; and to give active and general support to the purposes and aims of the Historic Hope Foundation.



Mrs. Dan K. Moore, then North Carolina's First Lady, was asked to serve as Honorary Chairman of this Friends group. Through the efforts of Robert Gatling, a former director, she consented to do so. Letters bearing her signature were dispatched to prospective members, and this group held its first meeting at the Cashie Country Club in Windsor, on January 26, 1968.

Mrs. Ernest L. Ives, who had long been interested in Hope and who had encouraged the Foundation in its efforts from the very beginning, accepted the Friends co-chairmanship with John E. Tyler. Mrs. Ives brought additional prestige to the already distinguished group, and her dynamic personality assured the Foundation a moving and productive subsidiary.

When Robert W. Scott followed Dan K. Moore as Governor in 1969, Mrs. Scott succeeded Mrs. Moore as Honorary Chairman of the Friends of Hope. She continues in this position at this time. In December of 1967, Robert White and Dan Bowen from Windsor, and Mrs. E. Rawls Carter, from Powellsville joined the board. Early in the year, the first Hope news bulletin was completed, thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Wilborn of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. A second news bulletin edited by Mrs. W. E. White was mailed to the membership in October, 1968.

Mr. Kemp continued his work at Hope during 1968, and though excellent progress was being made in actual restoration, the Foundation treasury was once again depleted. All funds previously raised had been spent. Work at the site did not stop. Mr. J. L. Hofler, Jr., of the Bank of Windsor, arranged for a \$15,000 loan. Mr. Hofler and his banking organization have through the years showed great confidence in the Historic Hope Foundation. This confidence and the bank's cooperation on many occasions en-

abled the Foundation to continue work at Hope when complete stoppage would have been necessary otherwise.

In 1969, the Foundation received more good news - the appropriation of another grant-in-aid from the North Carolina General Assembly in the amount of \$ 35,000. These funds enabled the Foundation to complete the exterior of Hope and bring to a close the outstanding work of Mr.



The King-Bazemore House

Kemp. On a Sunday afternoon in October, 1969, Hope was opened to the public for the first time. Admission was free. Mrs. E. Rawls Carter and Mrs. W. E. White arranged for volunteer guides to take people through the mansion. This event was held

primarily for those persons who had not previously seen the progress of the restoration.

On January, 23, 1970, the second ball to benefit Hope was held. Mrs. Norman Perry, Chairman, and her committees worked hard for the Governor Stone Mid - Winter Ball. This ball was equally as beautiful as the first and added still another \$6,700 to the restoration—an occasion to sample Bertie County hospitality at its finest.

W. H. S. Burgwyn, Jr., joined the Board in January, 1970. When Harry Lewis Thompson came on the Board in February, he accepted membership on the Cox House restoration committee with Robert White and Steve Burch. This committee directed the moving of the Cox House from near Roxobel and saw that the restoration was completed within a five month period. This small, late eighteenth century house was a gift from the late Mrs. Paul Jilcott and her children. The size was ideally suited for a caretaker's



house, and the architecture was compatible with that of the Hope mansion.

The Cox House could not have been moved and restored had it not been for the concern of the Honorable J. A. Pritchett. As a trustee of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation in Winston-Salem, he brought the Hope Foundation's needs to their attention. Grants from this Foundation totaled \$15,000 and made the completion of the caretaker's house possible.

Through the efforts of Robert C. White and Mrs. Wright Jernigan, both Bertie County natives, a caretaker moved into the Cox House in October, 1970. It was a great relief for the directors to have caretakers on the property. Both Mr. White and Mrs. Jernigan are rendering valuable service.

The candlelight reception on April 23, 1970, honoring Mr. and Mrs. Ives was perhaps our most unusual affair. When plans for this event were first presented to the Board of Directors, many felt they bordered on madness. Although the exterior of the Hope Mansion had been completed and painted, the interior was still untouched. No attempt had been made to replaster the walls. There was no plumbing, no electric lights, no heating system - just a bare barn of a house.

It was finally decided to go along with the plans for the reception. Invitations were mailed to every contributor and light refreshments were served in the drawing room. It was difficult to believe the directors were asked to dress in formal clothes to receive throughout the house. The reception turned out to be the perfect occasion. The weather was mild with no sign of rain. Directors had cringed at the thought of a rainy, cold night and people trying to drive up the long, muddy lane to find parking space only in a plowed peanut field.

The house was beautiful! The decoration committee never had a greater challenge! The halls and rooms were banked with spring flowers. Every flower garden in Bertie County was literally picked clean. Those who didn't bring flowers brought homemade cookies for the refreshment table. Drawers and closets were searched for used and discarded candles; after all, Hope funds were never to be used for occasions of this nature. As always, the word "economize" was familiar and understood.

Everyone brought what silver he could find. The only professional touch came when Francis Speight agreed to bring his paintings for the walls. It is unbelievable what warmth the paintings brought to the rooms. At the appointed hour, candles glowed, silver sparkled, the perfume of spring flowers permeated the air, and music by Billy Raynor at the console filled the rooms. The directors took their stations. Mrs. Ives took her place in the receiving line to accept expressions of affection and gratitude from the people of Bertie County.

The Cox House was officially opened to the public and dedicated on December, 5, 1970. Following ceremonies at Hope Plantation, representatives from both the Reynolds and Richardson Foundations were honored at a Hope Appreciation Day luncheon in the Windsor armory. Governor Robert W. Scott was the principal speaker. Mr. John W. Red, Jr., and Mr. G. C. Eichhorn of the Smith Richardson Foundation were present. The Honorable J. A. Pritchett represented the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. Mrs. Ives was present, as was First District Congressman Walter B. Jones. It was especially meaningful to hear President Tyler announce that Hope had been listed in the National Register of Historic Sites. This action had been taken on April 17, 1970.



December 5 was declared Hope Day in Bertie County by the County Board of Commissions. Mr. Wayne Stevensons of Station WBTE, Windsor, gave continuous radio time, and all fees for advertisements were donated to the Hope Foundation. With these fees and the sale of the subscription luncheon tickets, still more funds were placed in the Foundation's bank account.

If 1970 was a banner year, 1971 was to surpass it.

At the January directors meeting, President John Tyler announced that the Hope Foundation would again need to raise \$15,000. New fund raising ideas would have to be formulated, but after six years of dealing with such challenges, confidence had replaced panic.

Mrs. Norman Perry, the 1970 Ball Chairman, was invited to serve on the Board as was Mrs.

Goodwin Byrd, who had become unofficial decorator, florist, and horticulturalist to the Foundation. The announcement of their acceptance was made known at the January meeting. The Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson, III had just taken his seat as United States Senator from Illinois. The directors heard about this dedicated young man, and had seen him on television. It was with great excitement that the Foundation accepted Mrs. Ives offer to ask Senator Stevenson and his wife, Nancy, to come to Bertie County to

benefit Hope, at a black-tie subscription dinner on April 30.

The directors decided this occasion would provide the Foundation's "spectacular" for 1971. With all modesty, it did. Representatives from the press, radio, and television were present. Governor and Mrs. Scott headed the guest list. It was another night to be remembered in the annals of the Hope restoration. Governor Scott had asked Mr. Carroll Gillam, First District

Highway Commissioner from Windsor, to announce at the dinner honoring Senator and Mrs. Stevenson that state funds would be available for paving the roads at Hope. This statement came as a pleasant surprise and was welcomed news to all present, especially the Board of Directors.

During the year, continued progress was made at Hope. The plastering of the house was completed; the heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems were installed; the dairy of the house, which houses the electrical equipment, was finished; a burglar and fire alarm system was installed; and much work was put into landscaping

the grounds. Landscaping plans were formulated with the assistance of Miss Elizabeth Lawrence of Charlotte, a member of the Friends of Hope.

In July, the Department of Archives and History notified the Board that the 1971 General Assembly had appropriated \$25,000 on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis to be raised in the next biennium. Senator J. J. Harrington and Repre-



Hope Plantation today.



sentative Roberts Jernigan, Jr. worked diligently to secure this appropriation. With these state funds, the pending \$5,000 Richardson grant, and the matching monies to be raised, the financial picture looked promising for the first time.

Hannah Stone's Sewing Circle, a needlework exhibit, was scheduled for November 11th through 14th at Hope. A sampler worked by Governor Stone's daughter Hannah while she was a student at Salem College has been given to the Foundation by Mrs. H.H. Jones of New Bern a descendant of Governor Stone. Both antique and modern needle work were exhibited. It was impressive to see the quality, and quantity of fine handwork. It was a most successful display, with a large attendance.

A reception honoring county and local government officials was held prior to the opening of the exhibit. This was the Foundation's first opportunity to thank these officials and express public appreciation for their many services rendered since 1965.

The year 1971 ended on those last happy notes—the \$15,000 fund raising goal had been reached, entitling Hope Foundation to the \$5,000 Richardson grant. We were pleased to welcome four new directors on the Board, Mrs. Burges Urquhart, Jr., Mrs. Carroll Gillam, Mrs. George W.

Capehart, Jr., and Uriah F. Coulbourn, all of whom had previously worked to benefit the Foundation.

Plans for the third Governor Stone Ball ushered in the New Year. New director and Windsor native, Mrs. Carroll Gillam, was ball chairman and she announced the ball would be held on Friday night, January 28, 1972. It was to be an Anniversary Ball, celebrating the 250th birthday of Bertie County. Proceeds would be used to match still another Richardson Foundation grant to be awarded in 1972. The financial success of the Historic Hope Foundation since 1965 speaks for itself. The mansion was restored and opened to the public in the fall of 1972.

It was with a real sense of pride we saw this dream of many years realized. It is with great anticipation that we look to the future and see what this living house-museum-civic center could and will mean to our citizens.

It is with a feeling of nostalgia that we think of the past accomplishments, the many new friendships born out of this working together, and the close bonds developed between neighbors. To all who have had a part in the Hope success story, the directors express sincere appreciation. Let no man say miracles never happen.

