



Historic Hope mansion marks 200 years of Bertie County plantation life

Hope Plantation is opening wide its stately double doors for a special party to mark its 200th birthday. Hope Plantation's Homecoming, set for Saturday, June 14, will include sharing of photographs and stories from descendants and former plantation residents, a picnic lunch and group tours.

Located in Bertie County four miles west of Windsor, Hope Plantation offers glimpses of late 18th- and 19th-century in eastern North Carolina as well as the life of its original owner, former North Carolina governor David Stone. Stone (1770-1818) was quite the Renaissance man, graduating first in his class from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). Though trained as a physician, Stone opted for law in North Carolina. At 19, Stone was a delegate to the 1789 state convention, and went on to serve as a superior court judge, a member of both houses of the U. S. Congress, and governor from 1808 to 1810. He had two wives, 11 children and even found time to design Hope Mansion before dying unexpectedly at the age of 48.

In Stone's time, operations at Hope included a water-powered grist mill, blacksmith shop, cooper's shop and weaving houses. Wheat, corn, oats, rye, flax and cotton were grown, and an estate inventory lists 138 African-American slaves. Today, the plantation's centerpiece is the 1803 mansion, an architectural combination of Federal and Georgian architecture. Restored after years of neglect, it opened to the public in 1972.

Rooms are meticulously furnished with Stone possessions and period pieces. Two stunning cabinets, examples of Roanoke River Basin craftsmanship, stand in the dining room.

The drawing room features one-piece flooring 30 feet long. But one of the best assets is a tall, deceptively ordinary-looking pole in the impressive library. Push its secret button, and surprise!, it folds out into a ladder. The kitchen was authentically reconstructed just last year. Outside, the five-bay façade features a pedimented double portico. The hipped roof is topped by a widow's walk.

The 1763 King-Bazemore house nearby literally joined the plantation when it was moved four miles from its original site to Hope Plantation. Built by Bertie County planter and cooper William King, the two-story structure is one of the few examples of mid-18th century "hall and parlor" design in North Carolina. Its original meat house and detached kitchen are also on the property.

Historic Hope Foundation staff has been seeking descendants of Stone and King's family and slaves, as well as families who once lived in the houses. "Last week I found a woman who had lived in the King-Bazemore house in the 1970s, and one of our docents, Miss Bunnie Mizelle, had also lived there as a child," says Lisa Briley, coordinator of education and programs.

The foundation's all-day Homecoming is part of a year-long anniversary celebration. Upcoming events include a heritage camp for kids July 21-25 and photography and artifact exhibit that premieres August 1. The mission of the non profit organization, served by Roanoke Electric Cooperative, is to provide educational, cultural and recreational benefits through the plantation's preservation. Membership levels start at \$25.

— Karen Olson House

Hope Plantation: Open to the public 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday; 2-5 p.m. Sunday. Exceptions for holidays – best to call ahead. Admission: \$6.50 for adults; \$6 for 65 and older; \$2 for students (any age with ID); 3 and younger, free. Call (252) 794-3140, visit www.hopeplantation.org or email hopeplantation@coastalnet.com.