



HILLSBOROUGH'S HAUNTINGS

a spooky self-guided walking tour



THE ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC
HILLSBOROUGH

1. Alexander Dickson House: 150 E King Street

The Dickson House is an 18th century farmhouse that originally stood over a mile away to the southeast. The building was moved in 1983 to its current location. Known as the "Last Headquarters of the Confederacy," this house served as the headquarters for Confederate generals Joseph E. Johnston and Wade Hampton in the spring of 1865, as well as a makeshift hospital for wounded soldiers. Several thousand troops and horses camped on the grounds of the original site. The families that lived in the house before it was moved heard inexplicable sounds in the yard: the whinnying of horses, hushed voices of men talking. Did the spirits follow the house when it moved? If you listen closely, you too might be able to hear horses and mens hurried voices late into the night....

2. William Reed's Ordinary: 157 E King Street

William Reed's Ordinary was built around 1754 and served as a tavern from the colonial era until the late 19th century, serving spirits to the local townspeople. After the tavern closed, it became a private residence called Seven Hearths. According to the families that have lived in Seven Hearths, there are several ghosts that haunt the home. The first ghost is a girl named Jane Hayes. Jane died in the home in 1854 at the age of 16 from consumption. Residents have said that they have seen a girl in a nightgown with long, blonde hair, wandering from room to room. Passers-by have also said that they have seen the face of a young girl staring longingly out of the upstairs window. The second ghost is rumored to be another Hayes family member, Dr. William Hayes. Hayes practiced medicine out of the house in the 1920s. William believed that humans were reincarnated as animals after death, and his spirit has been seen roaming the halls of Seven Hearths in the form of a large tabby cat with the head of a man.

3. Stillhouse Branch: 157 E King Street

The creek at the back of William Reeds Ordinary is called Stillhouse Branch. Operated by freedman Africa Parker, the Stillhouse Branch was a legal still that served the local taverns in town. Around 1760, a drifter and con-artist named William Clayton, got into a fight with a man at the tavern. It is rumored that Clayton drowned in the Stillhouse Branch, but his body was never found. Many say the creek has been haunted ever since and consider his spirit to be unpredictable, angry, or even wicked. Make sure to look over your shoulder as you pass by this eerie spot.

4. Hughes Academy: Behind 200 E King Street

The Hughes Academy was founded by Samuel Hughes in 1845. Previously located north of Hillsborough, the Academy was moved here in 1864. Samuel Hughes died in 1884, but his daughter Annie Lavalette Hughes ran the school until 1914. Although it was a private school, the Academy was one of the only schools in the area that allowed girls to attend. The building was originally located 6 miles north of Hillsborough, and was brought here for preservation in the late 1990s. Many believe that bringing the school house to this location disturbed those already buried here, as voices have been heard by many visiting the site.

5. The Regulator Marker: Behind 200 E King Street, next to the Hughes Academy

On June 19th, 1771, James Pugh spoke the following words, "My blood would be as good seed sown on good ground, which would produce a hundredfold." He said this just moments before he was hanged, along with five others. The six men, known as Regulators, had challenged the North Carolina colony's royal governor over taxation. Having fought with Governor Tryon's men at Alamance Battleground, the captured Regulators were hanged here after a brief trial at the courthouse in Hillsborough. A common spot for hangings, the group was hanged here on this small hill. The men were buried in a mass grave, but no one knows where. Perhaps by the Eno River or perhaps their bones are buried right beneath your feet....

6. The Ice House:

The Ice House originally stood on property that was owned by Paul Cameron. Cameron, rumored to be the richest man in North Carolina before the Civil War, was the son-in-law of Thomas Ruffin, who was a Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court. Having an ice house on your property was an extravagance only the wealthiest in town could afford, as the building stored ice taken from the Eno River in the winter. After the Civil War, Cameron's estate was divided and sold. The property on which the ice house stands was sold to a wealthy widower from New England, but tragedy followed him here to this property. The man's daughter Anne fell in love with a local man, William, whom the widower felt was unsuitable for his lovely daughter. One night, the man killed William in the woods and dragged his body to the Ice Pit. His heartbroken daughter, Anne, drowned herself in the pond on the far side of the property. If you walk the property late at night, visitors say you can still hear William calling out for help and Anne calling desperately for William...

7. St Matthews: 210 St. Mary's Road

St. Matthew's was originally located on the corner of Churton and Tryon Streets and was home to the Hillsborough Academy, as well as hosted the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1788. Supreme Court Justice Thomas Ruffin donated the land on which the church now stands. During the Civil War, many townspeople fought for the Confederacy. The graveyard at St. Matthews is the resting place of many soldiers of the Confederacy and their families, such as Colonel Charles Tew and his daughter Lizzie. Little Lizzie died suddenly of a fever in 1862, the same year her father was appointed to lead North Carolina's confederate troops. During the war, Colonel Tew was killed at the Battle of Antietam and his body was never recovered. It is rumored that his wife walks these woods looking for the spirits of her husband and young daughter. Can you feel their spirits?

8. Norwood-Jones Law Office: 135 Court Street

The law office was built by William Norwood, who became a lawyer in the late 18th century and was the Superior Court Judge from 1820-1836. The building was used later by Cadwallader Jones, a famous Hillsborough lawyer and US magistrate. In 1842, William Norwood's son, John Wall Norwood, who became a state senator and was a member of the General Assembly, owned and used the building after Cadwallader. The Norwood-Jones law office is the last of three one-room law offices that once lined Court Street. There were many other structures that were once on Courthouse Square, such as the old jail and the stocks. This square has seen many historic court cases and events, such as the brutal beating of Edmund Fanning, the trial of the Regulators, Cornwallis marching through town, the Civil War, and various Civil Rights court cases, like that of the first Freedom Riders in 1949. Some say you can still hear the prisoners begging to be free, as well as the chants of those protesting on the streets....

9. Library/Cedar Walk: 137 W Margaret Lane

Mary Goddard Kollock Nash created the Cedar Walk in 1817 when she planted a double row of cedars to connect her two properties. Her daughters, Sally and Maria, known as the Nash sisters, used this path daily to walk between their properties. The sisters ran a school from one of their homes, called the Nash Kollock School for young ladies in the late 1850s. Students from the Hillsborough Military Academy liked to "scare" female students walking along this path. Take a walk along the Cedar Walk at night and you can hear the voices of the past whispering in the dark. Take care that no ghosts or ghouls jump out of the trees to scare you!

10. Masonic Lodge: 142 W King Street

Hillsborough's Masonic Lodge, Eagle Lodge 19, was founded in 1791. The building is a perfect cube and is aligned with the four directions. In 1793, Masons from the Eagle Lodge laid the cornerstone for the first building at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. This building was also used as a makeshift hospital for wounded soldiers during the Civil War. However, this site is most known for being the original location of Edmund Fanning's house. Fanning was a colonial official appointed by the royal governor, Governor Tryon, and was deeply hated by the local community. The Regulator Movement began in protest of the taxes set by the colonial government. When petitioning the governor didn't work, the Regulators turned to other methods. On September 5th, 1770, they rioted in Hillsborough, dragging a judge and Fanning out of the courthouse; beating them with clubs and whips, and dragging them through the streets. Fanning escaped, but his home was plundered and trashed. If you listen closely, can you hear the angry mob coming down the street? Or perhaps you can hear the cries of the Civil War wounded?

11. Methodist Church:

Designed and built by brickmason and builder, John Berry, the church was completed around 1860. During the Civil War, local churches donated their bells to be melted down to be made into cannons for the Confederate Army. The Methodists declined, but the First Baptist Church and St. Matthews both donated their bells for the cause. Could the bodies of the Confederate dead haunt these hallowed halls looking for more metal to melt down?

12. Old Town Cemetery: 115 E Corbin Street

Established in 1757, the Old Town Cemetery is one of Hillsborough's oldest burying grounds. Many of Hillsborough's residents are buried here, including one of North Carolina's three signers of the Declaration of Independence, William Hooper. Hooper was on Thomas Jefferson's committee to draft the Declaration of Independence and he worked with Benjamin Franklin on the intelligence committee that hired spies and agents. Hooper was originally buried here (the gravestone far end of the cemetery), but some of his remains were moved to Guilford Courthouse on the National Military Ground in 1894. The gravestone slab was eventually returned to the original Hillsborough burial site. Many feel the disturbance of his grave is why inexplicable events and sightings happen here so often. Can you feel Hooper's unsettled spirit?