

Nancy Jones House ^[1]

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by Jo Ann Williford, 2006



Postcard titled "The Governors Meeting Place," part of a series of postcards published by the North Carolina the Division of State Advertising in 1939.

^[2]The Nancy Jones House, located in Wake County ^[3] on what was once the main stage road between Raleigh ^[4] and Chapel Hill, was possibly built around 1803 by Nathaniel Jones, father-in-law of Nancy Jones. Nancy's husband, Henry, inherited the property. The two of them operated a stagecoach ^[5] stop and tavern ^[6] out of the house, although Henry was primarily a farmer who left the running of the tavern to his wife. The house is purported to have served as the setting for one of the state's favorite legends. Tradition holds that in 1838 Governor Edward B. Dudley ^[7] of North Carolina and Governor Pierce Mason Butler ^[8] of South Carolina stopped at the house during a trip between Raleigh and Chapel Hill. The governors consumed servings of apple ^[9] and peach brandy, and between rounds Dudley reportedly said to his colleague, "It's a damn long time between drinks."^[10] The quote has also been ascribed to Governor John Motley Morehead ^[11], who supposedly said it during a tense meeting



Newspaper article about Nancy Jones with her portrait. Image courtesy of the State

with South Carolina governor James H. Hammond ^[12] in the 1840s Archives of North Carolina.

^[13]

President James K. Polk ^[14], a North Carolina native, stopped at the Nancy Jones House on his way to Chapel Hill in May 1847 to deliver the commencement address at the University of North Carolina ^[15]. Governor William Alexander Graham ^[16] and former governor Morehead joined him at the house. Union general William T. Sherman and his troops bivouacked in the vicinity in April 1865, but no damage was done to the property. There is some indication that Nancy's son, Adolphus, operated a school out of the house following the Civil War ^[17]. The Nancy Jones House still stands as a private residence.

Reference:

Richard Walser, "Damn Long Time between Drinks," *NCHR* 59 (April 1982).

Additional Resources:

Lally, Kelly A. *The Historic Architecture of Wake County*. Raleigh, N.C.: Wake County Board of Commissioners. 1994.

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Image Credits:

"The Governors Meeting Place" in Durwood Barbour Collection of North Carolina Postcards (P077), North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill. http://dc.lib.unc.edu/u/?nc_post,8273 ^[18].

Newspaper article about Nancy Jones with her portrait. Call no. ConDev63-386A. Image courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.

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