

Hyde, Edward ^[1]



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by Herbert R. Paschal, Jr., 1988

1667–8 Sept. 1712

See also: [Edward Hyde](#) ^[2], Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History



Modern copy of an original portrait of Edward Hyde. Image from the North Carolina Museum of History.

^[3]Edward Hyde, first to hold the office of governor of North Carolina, was probably born at the family estate of Norbury Manor in Cheshire County, England. He inherited the family manors of Norbury and Hyde and other estates through his father, Robert (d. April 1670). His mother was Phillis or Felice (d. February 1668), the daughter of Ralph Sneyd of Keel and Bradwell in Staffordshire, who brought as her dowry a small amount of property in Shelmenthorpe, Yorkshire.

Hyde's family connections were of great importance to him, for through them he was able to claim kinship with two of England's monarchs, [Queen Mary II](#) ^[4] and [Queen Anne](#) ^[5]. The mother of Mary and Anne was Anne Hyde, first wife of [James II](#) ^[6] and daughter of the famous Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon. Queen Mary, Queen Anne, and Edward Hyde of Norbury and Hyde were descendants of a common ancestor, Robert Hyde (d. 1528) of Norbury and Hyde of Cheshire County. Edward was descended directly from Robert's oldest son, Hamnet, whereas the two queens were descended through the cadet line established by Robert's third son, Lawrence (d. 1590) of West Hatch, Wiltshire County. Lawrence's grandson, Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon, became the famous statesman of the reign of Charles II and subsequently the grandfather of the English monarchs, Mary and Anne.

The scion of the Hydes of Hyde and Norbury, Edward Hyde, the subject of this sketch, was the head of a landed family which had held the manor of Hyde since the days of the Norman Conquest. Norbury Manor had been acquired by marriage during the reign of Henry III. Edward Hyde's mother died a year after his birth and his father died when he was three. He had two sisters, Anne and Penelope, both of whom lived to maturity and subsequently married. The young orphans were raised at Denton by their grandmother, Anne Brooke Hyde, until her death in 1687.

Hyde entered Oxford University at age sixteen, enrolling in Christ Church College on 23 Nov. 1683. He did not take a degree. Little is known of his early career except that he labored under serious financial problems. His grandfather, also named Edward, had supported the Parliamentary cause against the king in the Civil War and at the restoration of Charles II was fined £3,000. This sum was borrowed from a lawyer named Shippon, and by the time Hyde reached his majority, he was being pressed for repayment by his family's creditors. His financial difficulties apparently increased with the passing years. Finally around 1690 or 1691, he was forced to sell Norbury Manor, which the Hydes had held for 450 years, along with his Shelmenthorpe property for £8,000 to the Leigh family of Lyme. Although this amount seems ample for him to have met his financial obligations, other financial concerns seem to have pressed in upon him. By 1708, as Hyde himself

admitted, he had been reduced "by divers unhappy accidents and great misfortunes . . . to a very deplorable condition" and was facing "utter ruine."

Battered by financial reverses, Hyde was able to secure some help through the patronage and support of his distant cousin, Lawrence Hyde, first Earl of Rochester, the uncle of Queen Mary and Queen Anne and the second son of the great Edward Hyde, first Earl of Clarendon. Rochester's position as the undoubted head of the Church of England ^[7] party made him one of the most powerful Tory leaders of his day. Edward Hyde owed him a great deal and on one occasion referred to him as his best friend. It was without question Rochester who, in July 1702, secured for him Queen Anne's appointment to the post of provost marshal of Jamaica with leave to remain in England and appoint a deputy. This position did not prove very lucrative, for in June 1704 Hyde memorialized the Board of Trade ^[8] to assist him in recovering the fees due him from his deputies in the island colony.

It was probably also Rochester who secured the queen's interest in Hyde's petition in 1708 for a governor's post in Carolina and led her to intervene with the Lords Proprietors ^[9] on his behalf. Although Colonel Edward Tynte had just been named governor of all of Carolina, the post of deputy governor of northern Carolina was available or could be made available. The deputy governor was normally chosen by the governor for all of Carolina, but early in 1709 the Proprietors issued orders to Colonel Tynte to commission Edward Hyde deputy governor of northern Carolina.

Hyde again petitioned Queen Anne for help. This time he sought a grant of £146 "which with some further helps from your May'ts Charitable bounty" would enable him to transport his wife and family to Carolina. On 4 Apr. 1709 a royal warrant for £146.13.4 was issued in Hyde's favor to be paid from "the arrears of the yearly rent of 20 marks reserved and made payable to us by the Proprietors of our Province of Carolina upon their charter." Hyde next sought and received authorization from Queen Anne for passage for himself and his party on board a naval vessel to Virginia. Meanwhile, the queen "signified her pleasure that Mr. Hyde with his family and servants" be permitted to live and eat aboard the *Rameleis* "until such time as the Convoy sayles to Virginia, in which he is to take his passage to his government of Carolina." The Hyde party numbered fifteen and consisted of his wife, children, and a number of servants. The voyage to Virginia was aboard HMS *Kinsale*. Its captain had orders to feed his passengers in the same manner as the ship's company and to provide them with the best accommodations the ship could afford. On 13 Aug. 1710 the *Kinsale* dropped anchor in the James River, and on 19 August Hyde went ashore as the ship's cannon roared a salute. At Williamsburg he was well received by Governor Alexander Spotswood ^[10] and other prominent citizens of the Virginia colony.

However, nothing but disappointment awaited Hyde ashore. He soon learned that Colonel Tynte, governor of all Carolina, had died at Charleston and that no one else in America had the authority to issue him his commission as deputy governor of northern Carolina. Without the commission he had no legal claim to the post. Under normal circumstances, Hyde's position would have been a difficult one, but recent political developments in North Carolina made his situation almost impossible. In 1701 a Vestry Act had been passed in North Carolina establishing the Anglican church ^[7] as the official, tax-supported church of the colony. Strong opposition to the act developed at once among the colony's numerous Quakers ^[11]. Allied with a large anti-Proprietary faction in the colony, they resisted efforts of pro-Anglican deputy governors to establish the church effectively in the province. In 1708, the two factions rallied behind rival claimants to the deputy governorship and armed conflict was avoided only when one of the claimants, the pro-Anglican William Glover ^[12], and a few of his chief adherents fled to Virginia. Thomas Cary ^[13], supported by the Quakers and other anti-Proprietary elements, was left in control of the government while his exiled enemies in Virginia denounced what they called the Cary usurpation. The result was great confusion and uncertainty within the North Carolina government and among the colony's residents over the next two years.

The arrival of Hyde in Virginia without a perfected commission now added greater confusion in North Carolina. There was indisputable evidence that the Lords Proprietors intended for Hyde to become deputy governor, but he lacked the necessary documents to establish a legal claim to the office. His arrival in Virginia was the signal for renewed political activity among the North Carolinians. Hyde had already been informed of most of his colony's problems, and the exiled Gloverites soon flocked about him to give their side of the controversy.

Governor Cary quickly made it clear that he would be unwilling to surrender his deputy governorship to Hyde and began to arm his followers. Cary found strong support among the nonconformists who, according to one observer, "did not want to have such a great Tory [Hyde] for governor."

Faced with a determined Cary and lacking the legal right to his post, Hyde remained in Virginia until he could hear further from the Proprietors in London. Individuals and delegations from North Carolina conferred with him at Norfolk and Williamsburg. William Byrd ^[14], who dined with him and Mrs. Hyde at the home of Governor Spotswood, characterized Hyde as "a jolly, good natured man but no valiant politician."

Cary found himself under increasing pressure to give way to Hyde and to permit him to assume the government. Those who favored Hyde's acceptance built their case upon his kinship to and his approval by the queen, the statements by eyewitnesses actually present at the Proprietary board at the time of his election to the deputy governorship, and the notice that Governor Tynte had given the North Carolina Council before his death that a new deputy governor was coming out. Cary's support began to fade in the face of this overwhelming evidence and increasingly intense pressure from many sides to accept Hyde despite his lack of proper credentials. Finally "after Long debates" Cary and his followers entered into a written agreement with the Hyde camp to accept Hyde as president of the Council but not as deputy governor until new orders came from the Lords Proprietors. This agreement was ultimately signed by all of the Proprietors' deputies in North Carolina including Thomas Cary.

Hyde now moved into the colony and settled with his family in "a rather fine dwelling" at the William Duckenfield ^[15] plantation on Salmon Creek not far from Balgra, the residence of Colonel Thomas Pollock ^[16], one of his chief supporters. Duckenfield may well have played a major role in inducing Hyde to come to North Carolina. In all probability they were friends of long standing; certainly they were contemporaries, near neighbors in Cheshire, and related by marriage.

Hyde assumed responsibility for the government on 22 Jan, 1711. From the beginning his position was precarious. Much of his support came from those with deep and unswerving hatred for Cary. These individuals sought revenge for past injustices and were unwilling to follow a course of reconciliation and moderation which the situation demanded. The prisoner of his friends' smoldering anger and resentment, Hyde lacked the necessary moral strength or political ability to check the vindictiveness of his followers.

Hyde's Council reorganized the courts, which had been dormant since 1708, and called for the meeting of an Assembly in March. The activities of this Assembly soon brought Hyde and his followers into conflict with the Caryites, for the Assembly enacted laws voiding acts of the courts in North Carolina since 1708 and calling into question the legality of many of the actions of Cary and his government. Its passage of a new and more comprehensive Vestry Act showed clearly that the religious issue was far from dead in the colony.

The Caryites bitterly denounced this legislation, which they realized was designed to punish them. Within a short time Cary and John Porter, Sr. ^[17], were arrested and impeached on charges of high crimes and misdemeanors, but they quickly escaped from the custody of the provost marshal, denounced Hyde, and proclaimed Cary as the true chief executive of the colony. Soon Cary had a large body of armed followers in Bath County where he fortified a plantation on Bath Creek with breastworks and cannon.

The armed uprising that followed is known as Cary's Rebellion ^[18]. The events of this rebellion show clearly that Hyde's hold on the government was tenuous, and that the harshness and extreme nature of the laws adopted in the March Assembly had cost him a great deal of support.

Hyde marched overland from the Albemarle to Bath with a force of armed men to recapture Cary, but retreated when he found Cary's position too strong to attack. Heartened, the Caryites armed two vessels and sailed to attack Hyde and his followers in the Albemarle. The assault was beaten back by Hyde and his small force, and Cary's vessels with their cannon were captured. Hyde meanwhile sought support from the Governor of Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, who offered to mediate the dispute. When Cary refused to accept Spotswood's mediation, the Virginia governor dispatched a force of Marines from the guard ships off Chesapeake Bay to North Carolina to aid Hyde in suppressing the Cary forces. On 17 July 1711, HMS *Enterprize* anchored off Currituck Inlet and sent three boats with fifty-five men under the ship's lieutenant to the assistance of President Hyde. By the twenty-ninth the men of the *Enterprize* had returned to their ship. Their appearance in the colony had led to the immediate collapse of Cary's support, for none of his followers had any desire to commit treason by firing on the queen's standard. Cary and four of his chief lieutenants fled into Virginia where they were picked up by the authorities and jailed. Shortly afterwards Spotswood sent them as close prisoners to England where after a year of hearings they were released for lack of proper evidence.

For the first time Hyde was now in full control of the North Carolina government although he still lacked a commission. In July 1711 Mrs. Hyde returned to England, probably with the intention of obtaining a proper commission for her husband. Long before this, in December 1710, the Proprietors had voted to make Edward Hyde an independent governor of North Carolina although they did not seek Crown ^[19] approval of his appointment until the following June. On 24 Jan. 1712 the Proprietors signed Hyde's commission, and Catherine Hyde sailed almost immediately with it for America. On 9 May 1712, Hyde presented his commission to the Council and was sworn in as governor of North Carolina.

Long before this event took place, Hyde and his sorely beset colony had experienced the terror and tragedy of Indian warfare. Whether incited by some of Cary's followers as some claimed or simply determined to settle old scores, a portion of the powerful Tuscarora ^[20] and several smaller tribes decided to attack and destroy the settlements in Bath County, as the settlements on the Pamlico and Neuse were called. Even as the Indians plotted during the summer of 1711, the beleaguered colony suffered drought and an epidemic of yellow fever. Finally, at dawn on 22 September, the Indians struck without warning throughout Bath County. For three days the region reeled beneath the shock of massacre and widespread destruction until the Indians at last turned back towards their villages.

Word of the terrible disaster soon reached Hyde in Albemarle County ^[21], which had been spared from the attack. Hyde found himself in an awkward situation. The hatred and ill feeling engendered by Cary's Rebellion remained to hamper efforts to secure full cooperation from the North Carolinians. The Quakers, who comprised an important segment of the Albemarle population, refused to take up arms or to permit anyone to use the arms they possessed. Nevertheless, Hyde moved to put the colony on a war footing. Thomas Pollock was named major general and plans for a retaliatory campaign were made. Messengers were dispatched to Virginia and South Carolina begging for help. Little assistance came from Virginia, but South Carolina proceeded to collect a force of 33 whites and 495 Indians under Captain John Barnwell to go to the aid of its sister colony.

This help was desperately needed, for Pollock's effort in mid-October to lead a force of about 200 men against the Indians failed due to the cowardice of a majority of his troops. Hyde found that massacre and Indian warfare had failed to erase dissensions within the colony. Governor Spotswood reported of the North Carolinians that the "Spirit of disobedience to which they have long been accustomed, still prevails so much he can hardly persuade them to unite for their common safety." In November, an Assembly, called to make plans for the conduct of the war, instead sought to restore several opponents of the Hyde government to office and had to be dissolved by President Hyde.

Fortunately for the strife-torn colony, Barnwell arrived on the Neuse late in January 1712 and immediately attacked the Tuscarora towns. Cutting a wide and destructive swath through the Tuscarora country, he reached Bath only to find that no one had been informed of his coming because the messenger from Charleston had been captured and taken prisoner by a French privateersman.

The Hyde government now bestirred itself to provide support for Barnwell. A new Assembly was hastily convened. It thanked Barnwell for his help, ordered 500 bushels of corn to be collected and sent to his force on the Pamlico, voted to raise 200 men for four months' service, and arranged to erect magazines on the Pamlico and Neuse. The Assembly ordered Barnwell to grant no peace or terms to any Indian towns involved in the massacre.

Only sixty-six men, most of whom had no ammunition, had joined Barnwell by the time he moved out to attack the Tuscarora. Eventually, however, an additional seventy North Carolina troops joined him as the campaign progressed. At first only a limited amount of grain was raised, but in time sufficient supplies were assembled to maintain the expedition in the field. Angered by the scarcity of supplies, Barnwell wrote the governor of South Carolina not to blame Hyde, for, he observed contemptuously, "the people regard him no more than a broom staff, they pay much more deference to my cutlass." Barnwell attacked Hancock's Fort and after a siege forced the Indians to sue for terms which were granted. His decision to sign a treaty of peace with the Indians countermanded his instructions from the North Carolina government, which reacted angrily to his action. Failing to receive from North Carolina the plaudits and rewards he felt he had earned, Barnwell took matters into his own hands. He lured a number of the former hostiles to a conference, took them prisoner, and shipped them off to South Carolina to be sold as slaves. The Indians in the Bath County area retaliated immediately, and soon the war was being waged as fiercely as ever.

Hyde now faced the task of leading a colony whose resources were almost exhausted. An Assembly, called to meet in July, enacted a stringent conscription ^[22] law which proved difficult to enforce. In an effort to unify the colony, Governor Hyde on 31 July 1712 issued a proclamation pardoning all those who had taken part in Cary's Rebellion except for Cary himself and four of his chief lieutenants. Hyde also announced his intention to take personal command of the military activities against the Indians. He determined to gather the militia ^[23] of Albemarle County and march at the head of these forces into Bath County. The governor declared that he planned to establish his headquarters at Bath Town and Neuse "that I may be nearer at hand to give such necessary orders, as shall be necessary for the better prosecution of War and I shall always be ready to do the country, the best service even to the hazarding of my life for them, so I hope I shall have . . . the necessary quantity of my militia forces as shall enable [me] to end the war with honor or make such a peace as shall not reflect upon the British Glory." Plans for the campaign were prepared, and Hyde began to gather recruits for the expedition.

These things were not to be, however. Dreaded yellow fever, epidemic in North Carolina in the summer of 1711, had struck the colony again in 1712, and on 1 September Hyde contracted the disease. About noon eight days later he died at his plantation at the head of Albemarle Sound. The governor's Council was in session at Hyde's estate when he became ill, and Graffenried later recalled that "we all became sick at the Governor's with the great heat and without doubt because we ate so many peaches and apples, so that eventually, in a few days the Governor died, which caused me much business, since he was a very good friend of mine." Three days later the Council elected Thomas Pollock to head the government until the Lords Proprietors' wishes could be known. Hyde was most likely buried on the plantation he had rented in Chowan (now Bertie ^[24]) County.

In 1692 Hyde married Catherine Rigby, the daughter of Alexander Rigby, of Leighton in Lancashire, by whom he had four children: Anne (b. 1693), the oldest; Penelope (b. 1697), who lived to the age of sixty-nine; Derby Lawrence (b. 1700), who died at age eleven in North Carolina; and Edward, who died a bachelor in Spain.

Mrs. Hyde was named administrator of the governor's estate and remained in the colony until March 1713, when she apparently returned to Hyde Hall in England. In the following year, her daughter Anne married George Clarke, of Swanswick near Bath in Somerset, a nephew of William Blathwayt. The couple at once moved to New York, where Clarke had settled earlier and where he eventually became lieutenant governor and served as acting governor from 1736 to 1743. Here they were joined by Catherine Hyde, who remained in New York until her death in 1738; she was interred in the same vault as Lady Cornbury in Trinity Church. Because Anne Clarke alone of the Hyde children had issue, the manor of Hyde passed ultimately to the Clarke family which thereafter assumed the hyphenated name of Hyde-Clarke.

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