

Hailee Reinke

A Building of Change

Hi, my name is Hailee Reinke and I live in Moyock, North Carolina in Currituck County. Essentially, I live in a middle ground on the border of Chesapeake, Virginia and the Outer Banks in North Carolina. Neighboring counties are seeded with a rich history. Dare County, where the Wright Brothers National Memorial preserves the hill where the brothers first took flight, as well as, the Outer Banks which boasts a coast dotted with famous lighthouses that guided ships in the night. Just to the North you have Williamsburg and Jamestown, both rich in history depicting how travelers came to the new world and many structures where people continued to create history. However, Currituck is home to a valuable and important history of its own. After doing some research, I decided to write about a historical structure in Currituck County that is lesser known, but is home to generations of history: the Jarvisburg Colored School.

Jarvisburg Colored School was built in Jarvisburg, Currituck County, North Carolina in 1868 on land donated by Mr. William Hunt Sr, an esteemed African American farmer from Currituck (Jarvisburg Colored School). The Jarvisburg Colored School opened in 1868 as a one room schoolhouse solely for the education of Currituck County's African American children. Over two decades after its establishment, the Jarvisburg Colored School was rebuilt in the 1890s with an expansion to a two-room building (Jarvisburg Colored School). Finally, in 1911, the schoolhouse was expanded upon again to accommodate for its current size (Jarvisburg Colored School). In 1950 the building officially closed along with all of the other small African American schools when Currituck opened a Consolidated School. While the Jarvisburg Colored School may seem like the dozens of other African American schoolhouses built in the late 1800s, that's

not the case. In fact, Currituck County's Jarvisburg Colored School is believed to be the oldest African American school still standing in the state (Terry, and Stasio)!

The Jarvisburg Colored School is a valued gem of Currituck County. Standing on less than one acre of land, the two-story schoolhouse was built of cypress wood with a beautiful contribution to Queen Anne style design aspects (Jarvisburg Colored School). The schoolhouse has a gable roof which highlights a pyramidal roofed bell tower (Jarvisburg Colored School). Not to mention, the building still has the original four foot wooden spire leading to the second floor (Jarvisburg Colored School)! While the schoolhouse itself was beautifully crafted, the purpose of the building was not so heart-warming. Racism being the case, I can imagine if there was a time-capsule discovered at the time the building was built there would be so many illuminating artifacts. I would imagine the time-capsule would contain building plans for the schoolhouse. It would be so interesting to see the original work of the buildings and a detailed outline of the building's original layout and features. Plus, I think it would be incredible to discover a letter from Mr. William Hunt Sr., who donated the land for the school, in the time-capsule. I could only dream of Mr. William Hunt Sr. describing his aspirations for the schoolhouse. It would be incredible to read Hunt's goals on educating the community's African American children and his desire for desegregation. Not to mention, I would find it fascinating to see a potential roster for the schoolhouse. The roster could help divulge the names of the children who went to school there, providing a gauge on the African American population in Currituck at the time. Nevertheless, the Jarvisburg schoolhouse, now a museum, is decorated in traditional items used in African American schoolhouses in that era. Wooden desks, textbooks, kitchen utensils, a furnace, a chalkboard, and even a history of Currituck's African American community are common artifacts on display.

In the 1990s, a huge effort was made by former Jarvisburg Colored School alumni and community members to help restore the school (Terry, and Stasio). Then, on December 11, 2009, the Jarvisburg Colored School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, commemorating the schoolhouse for being the oldest standing colored school in North Carolina (Historic Jarvisburg Colored School - Currituck Outer Banks). The building's nationally recognized history may not be very well known, but the thought of a time-capsule being discovered at the building of the property leaves the mind to wonder how much history can be uncovered! It's ironic to think how such a small building has a monumental impact.



Citations

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