Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill in Yadkin (formerly Surry) County was the home of former North Carolina Chief Justice Richmond Mumford Pearson. Judge Pearson conducted a private Law School here for approximately 30 years, 1848 until his death in 1878. Over 1000 students including 6 state Supreme Court justices, 3 U.S. representatives and 3 state governors attended school here. Classes were held in a modest building (no longer in existence) on the west side of the grounds or he simply under the trees on this property. Students lived on tiny log huts or boarded with local families.

This brick home, build in the mid-later 1800s was restored in the 1970s and the surrounding 30 acres have been turned into the Historic Richmond Hill Nature Park. Richmond Hill is a part of the North Carolina Civil War Trails. Judge Pearson who was opposed to secession even though he owned slaves, became known throughout state because of his rulings against the conscription of men into the Confederate Army.

Richmond Hill Nature Park is open from dawn to dusk.

This site, a part of the “Geocaching for History” program, was researched and placed by the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield North Carolina Foundation and the North Carolina Humanities Council. The goal of this program is to encourage physical activity and exploration of the history of our community.
Richmond Mumford Pearson
The Fifth Chief Justice
Richmond Hill was the home of North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Richmond Mortan Pearson (1825–1876) and his family. Pearson conducted a law school from 1849 to 1877 in a small building located west of the house. Students lived in a log cabin near Pearson's home, or boarded with the owner's family. Pearson was known for his work in railroad law, acting as a mediator in several high-profile cases. Pearson reportedly taught a thousand students.

Pearson, who served as chief justice from 1859 to 1878, opposed secession. During the Civil War, he championed individual rights over the power of the Confederate government. When Confederate conscription laws were enacted, men were arrested for avoiding the draft or deserting the army. Pearson held the laws unconstitutional and wrote several men from the county jail. The state required a prison official to bring the prisoner to court to determine whether he had been imprisoned unlawfully and, if the judge so ruled, to free him. The Confederate government...

(Richmond Hill plaque text continues on the next page.)
Richmond Hill

Estate and Law School of
Richard M. Pearson
Chief Justice of the N.C. Supreme Court, Teacher,
Champion of Freedom and the Rule of Law

The Man
Richmond M. Pearson moved to Yadkin from Davie County, N.C., about 1848, just before his election to the legislature in the North Carolina Supreme Court. Pearson served on the Court for 29 years, 59 of them as Chief Justice. His tenure encompassed the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and his decisions were both far-reaching and controversial.

Pearson was opposed to secession. During the Civil War he staunchly supported the laws and repeatedly defended individual rights. Supported by Governor Zabala...

Upon the fall of the Confederacy, Governor Zabala

The Estate
The original log house stood southwest of the present brick house, which was built about 1891 for Pearson's second wife, Mary McDonald Pearson. A separate kitchen once stood to the west of the main building. Log cabins inhabited by the law students were approved by the court.

By the late 1970s, the house had been abandoned for many years and was badly deteriorated. At this time a program of renovation was initiated by the Yadkin County Historical Society and others.

Funds came from Federal, State and local governments as well as from foundations, businesses, and individuals. The house has now been fully restored and is furnished with period interiors, some donated by Pearson family descendants. Additional furnishings are still needed.

Today, the Historic Richmond Hill Nature Park is managed as a museum by the County of Yadkin.

Historic Richmond Hill Nature Park
1999! www.yadkincountynaturepark.org