

King William Historical Society Newsletter

September 21, 2009

From Our President

When I was elected to serve as your president, one of my personal goals was to establish an exchange of ideas with our neighboring counties' historical societies. I'm very pleased to let you know that some of the society board members of Caroline, King & Queen, Essex, and Hanover have expressed the same willingness to keep us informed of their efforts and events.

To build on this communicative effort, we will be adding to our newsletter email list those officers of the historical societies who wish to hear from us. We are already discussing joint visits and field trips, which would provide mutual benefit and enjoyment. Providing opportunities for our neighboring society members to see our museum and the historical places in King William is truly part of our purpose.



Thanks and best *Lloyd*

July Meeting Highlights

Our meeting in July was very short but the socializing lasted for hours! Many thanks to Ruth Armatage for having the event at her house. There was plenty of food, spirits and fellowship. In addition to a good turnout of members, we had several guests - some of whom became members by the end of the night! Adjacent to Ruth's home is Mount Columbia, which was open for tours. This 18th century home is owned by John

and Fran Freimarck and is on the State and National Historic Registers.

King William Historical Museum

A three-day online course will be held at the museum for learning to operate Past Perfect, our museum system for documenting and cataloging artifacts and documents. The classes are the mornings of Sept. 29th, 30th, and Oct. 1st.

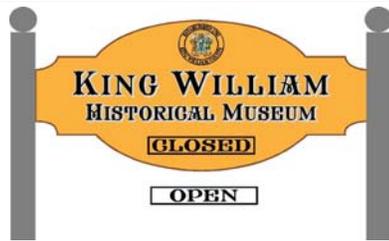
We need eight people to attend and familiarize themselves with this system. We don't need to be experts, but knowing the basics of how we accession items is vital to the progress and success of our museum. Any KWHS members can attend. Please let Lloyd or Carl know if you can help with this. Coffee and Danish will be served!

We are also in need of docents and library workers (cataloging, filing, etc). If you can help, please contact Pat Fitzgerald or Carl Fischer.

We are planning to develop some new exhibits during the next twelve months. The theme will be society changes during the period 1600-1789. Three groups have been established to focus on this. If you have any artifacts or ideas contact Carl Fischer.

The Virginia Standards of Learning criteria have been developed for the museum. This will allow students to tour and apply these standards.

Also, a new road sign for the Museum has been designed to replace the temporary smaller sign on Route 30. This will hopefully attract the attention of more people who travel Route 30.



Our Own Civil War Medal of Honor Recipient

We were recently contacted through our website by a military historian looking for a Civil War Congressional Medal of Honor recipient named Robert Blake. His citation reads as follows:

“On board the U.S. Steam Gunboat Marblehead off Legareville, Stone River, 25 December 1863, in an engagement with the enemy on John's Island. Serving the rifle gun, Blake, an escaped slave, carried out his duties bravely throughout the engagement which resulted in the enemy's abandonment of positions, leaving a caisson and one gun behind.”

They believe he resided in King William County before and after the war. By 1870 he had married and settled in the Acquinton area and records indicate he lived there until after 1920; but they never determine where he was buried. Robert was a runaway slave that enlisted at Port Royal in the U.S. Navy. He may be the first African-American to have received the Medal of Honor. Thanks to Steve Colvin, who located the death certificate, we believe Robert Blake is buried at Third Union Baptist Church. There is no grave marker, so the wheels are in motion to obtain the service and pension records, and to find a surviving family member for approval. Our goal is to have our government provide the appropriate head stone befitting an American hero. We'll keep you informed of our progress.

Acquinton Church Stabilization

Mr. Carroll Lee Walker contributed all funds necessary for Rappahannock Electric Co-op to relocate the overhead

power lines beside the church. They are now buried underground, which was necessary for obtaining construction permits. The engineers, Koelzer and Associates, should have their final drawings to Mr. Walker this month and construction should begin soon after. The walls will be filled in using colonial period brick from a source in the Gloucester area. Mr. Walker has gone above and beyond in his commitment to the progression of this project, particularly given these troubled economic times. At our upcoming membership meeting in October we will circulate a letter and card of thanks for membership signature to be given to Mr. Walker for his most gracious efforts. A curious sight occurred at Acquinton Church during the first week of August. It involved Fischer and Huckstep commandeering a bucket truck while spraying defoliant along the top exposed walls of the church to kill the emerging vegetation. It's still unclear who was driving and who was in the bucket....

For more information, contact Lloyd Huckstep

Save the County Jail

Herb White has led a subcommittee to assess the feasibility of restoring the Old County Jail on the courthouse grounds. Estimates from three different contractors for replacement of the rafters and roofing have ranged between \$35,000 and \$40,000. We have approached county administration and requested they fund this effort and they are considering it. We may also consider fundraising and possibly applying for grants to help with the cost.

For more information, contact Herb White.

Documenting King William Cemeteries

Additional information continues to be submitted for the new book documenting graves in the county.

We have contacted an experienced publisher to help format and index the book. The new book will be published and made available for a nominal fee. We also hope to make this information available on our new website for online viewing.

For more information, contact Bob Hubbard

Map Project

We continue to work with Mr. Bibb Edwards to create an enhanced map of King William County showing historic homes and old home sites, reservations, churches and mills. We want all the old schools and additional church locations documented as well. We will present this map at our October meeting and ask those who live in various sections of the county to present more information from their neighborhoods relating to old home sites and graveyards so they may be placed on the map.

For more information, contact Bob Hubbard

Society Bulletin

We are searching for individuals with interesting stories to share with the society in a bulletin to be published in the fall. Steve Colvin has written an article on the old jail at the courthouse. Summer Chapman has documented the history of Acquinton Church. I'm sure there are many other stories our members could share about people, places or events in King William County's past. If you have a suggestion but don't want to write an article, maybe we can write it for you contact *Bob Hubbard*.

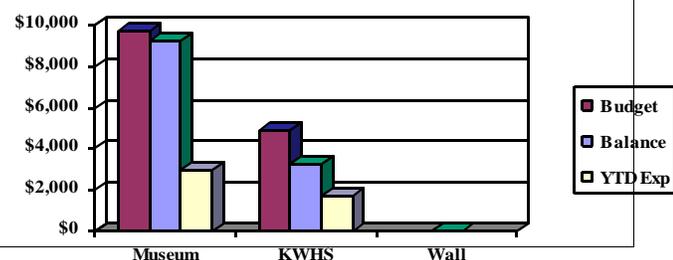
Christmas Holiday Open House at the Museum

With the approaching holiday season comes the opportunity for us to present a Christmas open house at our museum. This will be open to the public and include invitations to the memberships of the surrounding county historical societies. With some help from our local newspapers and our membership, this could be quite a fun event. Mr. Herb Collins has offered to let us display his wonderful collection of 18th and 19th century toys at our museum for the Christmas season. We will put up a small Christmas tree with antique ornaments and adorn the surrounding area with the toy collection. Hopefully some of our members will bake and serve some goodies and punch. The planned date is December 13th - further planning for this event will occur at our membership meeting on October 25th.

19th Century Diaries Located

The day journals or diaries of two King William ladies of the 19th century have come to light after a half-century of "safe-keeping" by the families. They concern life in the Aylett area from the antebellum period through the war and into reconstruction.

The 1850-1875 diary of Lucy Elizabeth Pollard Waring as well as that of her granddaughter, Nina Virginia Hill have been located at a descendant's home. We hope that the stories they contain will be available for research within a few months. The content of these two-day journals will be an excellent complement to the journal of Caroline Kean Hill, a transcribed copy of which was presented to our museum by Mrs. Gwynn Litchfield some time ago. Other King William related journals and excerpts in our museum which describe



King William county life during the mid 19th century are found in Rev. Alfred Bagby's King and Queen County Va., Dorothy Atkinson's King William County in the Civil War, and Judith White McGuire's Diary of a Southern Refugee. These personal accounts of life in the past are incredibly valuable learning tools. Anyone having personal day journal or memoirs from the past, and is willing to allow us to scan them, please contact Lloyd. We need these stories.

Created by Bob
Hubbard

Dues Reminder

The King William Historical Society's year runs from July 1- June 30 and dues are now due for the 2009-2010 year. At our April 19, 2009 meeting, the members unanimously approved an increase in dues to help fund the many new projects and activities.

The new dues structure is:

Individual..... \$20 Family
..... \$30
Student \$10 Lifetime
..... \$250

Mail to: King William Historical Society
PO Box 233
King William, Va. 23086

New Members

We have 10 new Historical Society members joining us just since this past June: John and Cheryl Garrett, Adele and Bob Smith, Patty Waring, CeCe Johnson, Carolyn Elliott, Virginia Clarke, Sandy Satterwhite and Virginia Creek. This brings the total to 19 people who have joined the society this year.

Calendar

- Next KWHS meeting is October 25, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. at Beulah Church (Rt. 600). Following the meeting, we will tour the historic homes Retreat

(c.1808) and Roseville (c.1807) on nearby Herring Creek Road.

- A Museum Christmas open house will be held December 13th.

Contacts

- Lloyd Huckstep 746-0450 - Herb White 769-2413
- Bob Hubbard 994-2637 - Carl Fischer 843-9194
- Pat Fitzgerald 769-3919

2009 Operational Finances