

King William County Historical Society Newsletter

July 2015

From Our President

Welcome to the summer!

As the temperature rises, some of us are spending more time outside, touring historic sites, while others are enjoying the cool of a climate-controlled archive or museum. All of us, though, are thinking about how lucky we are to have such great history in King William County.

Many of you are welcoming guests into your home and brainstorming on what to do locally. Have you considered checking out all of the new changes to our museum? Perhaps touring through Acquinton Church or visiting our new property, the Lanesville Christadelphian Church.

While we do not have docents interpreting these sites (yet), they are deserving of your time and appreciation for both are preserved primarily through the efforts of our society's members...and one individual in particular who has always strived to save our county's history, but likes to work in the background, without fanfare. His efforts over the last generation have helped us preserve many of the most important landmarks that survive in our county, inspiring others to take steps to appreciate and help preserve their homes, historic businesses, and landmarks throughout the region. He is one significant person among many who deserve our thanks, although they seldom seek it out. And this is what makes our community so special.

When you visit the museum, or when you drive down Rt. 30 or 360, you can see that history matters to us in King William County. At the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Reservations, in our schools, and along our creeks and rivers, we have some of Virginia's most interesting historic sites and buildings, some of those just waiting to be rediscovered.

As I look at the months ahead, I am thankful for this rich history and these unsung heroes who do so much to preserve our past and share it with us and our future generations.

As always, look at your calendar for the year to come, consider attending our meetings, visiting the museum with friends in tow, and get involved with one of our many exciting projects. You won't be disappointed!
Dr. David A. Brown,
President dabro3@email.wm.edu

Brick Making on the Courthouse Lawn

Thirty-eight Summer Sneakers participants and seven volunteers learned to make colonial bricks at King William County Courthouse on Wednesday, July 1, 2015. The mucky activity was part of a two-hour visit to the King William Historical Museum and Colonial Courthouse. Rebecca Townsend, Museum Chairman, had a kiddie pool filled with red clay dug from a local field. Straw and water were added to the mixture as participants slogged around in a circle, using the same technique that was used during colonial times.



The "mud mixers" were told that they would have been either indentured servants, slaves or children. They then became the

"molders" rolling the bricks in sand, and shaping them in wooden brick molds. After two weeks of air drying and then baking in a brick oven of a temperature of over 1800 degrees Farenheit, approximate 1/3 of the bricks would be suitable for use in building the outside walls. The rest would be either under or over cooked and would have been used for substandard purposes (inside walls, walkway paths, or as part of the furnace structure. Of the thirty eight students, thirty bricks were cast. Two Summer Sneakers employees earned their muddy feet: Mr. James Broaddus and Allison Fox, along with most of the students. This activity helped young people understand the difficulties that our forefathers had to deal with.

Earlier in the day, the students visited the Pamunkey Indian Reservation, stopped by the Lester Manor train depot, went into the Lanesville Christiadelphian Church to see the oldest surviving Christiadelphian Church, and enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch.

Membership and Dues

Please note that The King William Historical Society's year runs from July 1- June 30. This means it's time to pay your dues. We continue to identify projects and needs for preservation in King William County and need your support. We currently have about 30 members who have not paid dues for the past year. With interest rates being so low, we may have difficulty meeting our annual expenses in the coming year if our current members don't renew their membership.

The dues structure is:

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

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

"Burned Records" now available at the KW Clerk's Office

A laptop computer and printer have been recently placed in the King William Clerk's office records room to be used for research during regular Clerk's office hours. The computer has the entire set of files of the burned records of King William County loaded onto the hard drive and users may view (and print) the pdf files or the original images. This will be a great asset to visitors that come to King William to search for records when the museum and research room are not available.

The laptop was the generous donation of the Virginia Student Training and Refurbishment program. VA STAR students at King William High School refurbish surplus hardware from state and private agencies. Refurbishing computers gives students an opportunity to explore various aspects of the technology industry. These laptops are donated to serve the needs of the community.



Clerk Patricia Norman pictured here with Anne Jackson, Lloyd Huckstep and Bibb Edwards

WANTED: Women of Note or Notorious Women of King William County

The Museum has recently formed a committee to create a Women's History Exhibit. This committee is seeking nominations of women who should be honored for their contributions to King William County. As they begin to develop this exhibit, they are counting on you to make suggestions of women of note. Please

contact Audrey Mitchell (804) 836-3565, with any suggestions or questions about this upcoming project.

Minutes of the April 19, 2015 Membership Meeting

The Membership Meeting of the King William Historical Society was called to order at 2:30 pm on April 19, 2015 at the County Administration Building. There were 24 members and guests present. The Treasurer's report was made available showing the following balances: Checking \$19,377, Museum Savings \$23,690 and Investment Account \$107,023.

The Museum Report was given stating that the Museum Council met on April 12th. The following items are now available for sale at the museum: King William "Lost Records" Thumb Drive \$35, King William Tax Records 2 CDs \$5 each.

A committee is working on a new project for Women's History Exhibit at the Museum. Space has been made available in the Museum for the Exhibit and information will be coming soon on how to nominate a woman for the Exhibit, who has had made a significant contribution to King William County history.

We can always use new volunteers to help at the Museum, please contact Rebecca Townsend (804) 338-5738 if you are interested. All are invited to visit the Museum in the old Clerks office at the Courthouse. Summer hours are Saturdays and Sundays 1 - 5pm (except Holidays).

The transfer of the deed of the Christadelphian Church Property from Mr. Walker to the KWHS took place on April 12, 2015. The property is one acre for the church, and another adjoining parcel of approximately four acres. Additionally, Mr. Walker included a gift of \$25,000 for the upkeep of the property, and a scrapbook with pictures of the restoration of the Presley Barn on rt. 360 to be placed in the Museum.

The KWHS Board is looking for someone who is interested in being more

active in the Society in the capacity as Vice President for the upcoming year.

The Society was pleased to have local author and historian Connie Lapallo give a presentation on her books about the women at Jamestown in the early 1600s. She has published two historical novels: Dark Enough to See the Stars in a Jamestown Sky (covering the period 1592 - 1611), and When the Moon Has No More Silver: The Continuing Story of the Women and Children of Jamestown (covering the period 1611 - 1620), and is working on a third book in the series that will cover the period from 1621 - 1650. Her writing career started by accident when she was tracing her genealogy and discovered that one of her ancestors was Cecily Bailey from Jamestown, her great grandmother twelve generations back. Cecily was left behind in England at age 9, when her parents sailed to Jamestown, since she needed to reach the age of 10 to have full shareholder rights in the Virginia Company at Jamestown, and came later to join her mother who was still living after the hard winter there.

Ms. Lapallo's research turned up many interesting facts about the women and children in Jamestown who had been arriving since 1608, not 1619 as typically taught in American History books. She felt called to write about her findings on these women and children since not much had been documented on them before.

Ms. Lapallo described how the trip across the Atlantic would have been 12 to 14 weeks in the dark and smelly 'tween deck of the small ships, subsisting on weak beer and biscuits and dried pork. She gave a lively account of the shipwreck of the Sea Venture off the Bermuda coast, and the Starving Time in Jamestown in the winter of 1610.

The Society members gave a resounding round of applause for the delightful presentation and lined up to have Ms. Lapallo sign copies of her books. All are anxiously awaiting the third book in her series on the women and children in Jamestown. The Society enjoyed refreshments and fellowship after the presentation.

