

KING WILLIAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter
July 2019

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UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

July 21, 2019, 2:30 PM

Windsor Shades
1685 Sweet Hall Road
West Point, Virginia 23181

The next meeting of the King William Historical Society will be held on Sunday, July 21st at 2:30 at Windsor Shades on the Pamunkey River near West Point.

Please join us for a discussion with Carl and Lynn Fischer about the history of their home.

We will have our annual picnic. Fried chicken, iced tea and water will be served. Please bring a dish to share. If there's no rain, we will meet outside.

Directions: From the intersection of Routes 30 and 360, drive about 17 miles to Sweet Hall Road (Route 34). You will go past Old St. John's Church, then about 2 miles from the church turn right onto Sweet Hall Road. Go to the end of the road, 1.9 miles. You will go over the railroad tracks. Do NOT turn right on to Waterville Cove Road. You will see a house on a pond. Drive right in front of that house to the gate at the end of the State road. Parking will be in the field just before the house (See Sign). From West Point go 7.2 miles to Sweet Hall Road and turn left onto Sweet Hall Road.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are having a great summer of 2019! The KWCHS Board recently met and I would like to update you all on what is happening at the King William County Historical Society.

The Edwards Family will be having their reunion at the Christadelphian Church owned by KWCHS on the second Sunday in August.

Deed Book 1 has been transcribed and edited and will be available for sale to the public shortly. The sales of the transcribed deed books will benefit the King William Museum.

High speed internet will be available to the public at the Colonial Courthouse shortly.

On July 21 we will have the next Membership meeting. Carl and Lynn Fischer will be hosting the meeting at their beautiful home on the Pamunkey River. I hope you will all be able to join us for a great day and please bring your checkbook so you can renew your membership with the KWCHS.

The KWCHS Board voted to move forward with an Archaeological survey and public dig days at the historic King William County complex. This project shall take place in the fall and the public will have the opportunity to participate and witness history unearthed. The survey will be conducted by DATA Investigations, LLC.

The KWCHS will have a booth at the King William County Fest that will take place on August 17th from 10-2 at the King William County Rec Park. Volunteers to man the booth at this festival would be appreciated. Please contact me at sallysgoldens@gmail.com if you have an interest in serving.

Finally, the Board is planning a lecture series at the Historic St. John's Church in West Point. The first of this series will be on October 20th and will feature John Erickson as the speaker. Please mark your calendars. I hope to see you all in the near future.

Warmest Regards,

Sally W. Pearson

King William Historical Society President

Windsor Shades, a story and a half frame structured house, was built around 1750. Captain Thomas Dansie established a ferry to cross the Pamunkey in 1754 and operated a tavern at the house. The ferry continued until 1927 when a bridge was built in WestPoint. George Washington lodged at the tavern. The Marquis de Lafayette spent two weeks in King William in August 1781, at Windsor Shades and Chelsea Plantation.

The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.



Windsor Shades - photo by Powellc14

CENTRAL GARAGE

By Gus Kasper

It is incredible how a place can change in just a few short decades; Central Garage is no exception. Aside from only a couple of buildings standing today, it would be nearly unrecognizable to King William residents living only fifty years ago. Despite the radical changes over the last hundred years, Central Garage has remained the center of its surrounding community since the early 20th century.

King William High School was built in 1925, and is probably the second building built in the Central Garage area, second only to Sharon Church which was built in 1845. It was nothing like the high school today, although it was situated on about the same ground. The building was built with four Tuscan columns, along with many other traditional building elements. The school served all students able to commute to it, ages K-12 (there were over a dozen other schools scattered throughout the county). Also built on the school grounds was the community building, built by the residents who used it. It was constructed around the time of the Second World War and served as a venue for anyone in the community wanting to host a dinner or dance. The building also had several rooms which functioned as overflow classrooms when the population of students outgrew the main building. Today the only surviving structure of the old school is the Pine Building, situated between the new high school and the track.

Running next to the high school property is King William road, also known as Route 30. In 1925, 30 was an unpaved road which deviated from its modern route. The section of Route 30 running from West Point to Central Garage intersected with what is now Sharon Road (in 1925 Sharon was part of the main road running from Richmond to Tappahannock) at a T-stop. Instead of passing by McCauley Park and the Recreational Park, Route 30 took Venter Road, or Route 611 up to Ashland.

At the old intersection of 360 and 30 (what is now the intersection of Sharon Road and Route 30) there were two stores. Only one still survives, which was most recently Central Garage Antiques. This building appears to date back to the 1920's. It was owned by the Kavonich family who operated it as a small restaurant and convenient store, complete with gas pumps in the front of the building. During the growing season fresh produce was put outside for sale, brought in by local King William farmers.



Presently, intersection of Route 30 and Sharon Road



Most recently, Central Garage Antiques, photo from early 1900s

During the operation of the Central Garage store, segregation was still being enforced. The restaurant had two doors, one on the left and one on the right, African Americans were only allowed to enter on the right to receive take-out food. Contrary to this strict segregation, there were two African American brothers who stocked the wood burning stoves for the restaurant, as well as a black staff in the kitchen. Next door to the store is the remains of an old auto shop. The auto shop is clad with silver brick patterned aluminum siding, along with two wooden sliding doors. This shop is believed to be what gave the town its name of Central Garage.

The Central Garage store also served as a bus stop for two routes. One route ran from Richmond to Tappahannock (and then farther north). The other route ran from Middlesex, through King William, and then to Richmond. The Central Garage Store remained the main bus stop until the 1950's when the store opposite it became the regular stop.

This store was called Brightstar, and was built sometime in the 1940's. It stood on what is now the empty lot in front of the Aylett Medical Center (near the south east corner of 30 and Sharon). Like Central Garage, Brightstar also had gasoline pumps and a small restaurant. Children from the school were able to buy candy and other treats during recess. Brightstar also maintained the same segregation policies as the Central Garage store, although there were exceptions depending on how well the owner knew the family. There was a separate



Brightstar

waiting area containing one bench for colored people to wait for buses, while white passengers were allowed to wait in the restaurant. However, as previously mentioned, there were exceptions. The Brightstar restaurant was also staffed by African American women who did the cooking and serving of food.

When Route 360 became a four-lane highway in the early 1960's, both small stores and restaurants closed their doors, as Sharon Road became only a bypass. However, the history of the town did not stop there. Since then, Central Garage has grown to include a full grocery store, eleven restaurants, two banks, three gas stations, and many other stores. And the growth hasn't stopped yet, there is still an apartment building and a Tractor Supply under construction. It will be interesting to see how Central Garage evolves and grows in the next fifty years.

Much of the information in this article was given by several individuals in the area, so it is with many thanks, especially to Dr. Alvin Lomax, Mr. and Mrs. William Guy Townsend, and Mr. Eugene Campbell. The photographs of both stores were kindly provided by Mr. Eugene Campbell. The black and white aerial photograph from 1953 was found at Zoar State Forest.



Gus Kasper is a King William resident majoring in History at the University of Mary Washington.

MEMBER NEWS

UPDATE: *Transcribing King William County's Deed Books*

We are proud to report that the initial draft and edit of Deed Book 1 (1702-1707) of the King William County records is complete. We hope to have the final product ready for purchase in the very near future. Transcriber Eric Grundset and editor Suzanne Derieux worked hard over the last six months to produce an accurate, key-word-searchable document that we hope will help researchers move beyond the indexes and provide easier access to the many secrets that still lie hidden in these records. Transcription and editing was made possible through the contributions of Harry and Alma Coon and through their generous gift we hope to continue transcribing and making available to the public through purchase the complete series of all 19 surviving deed books, spanning the years 1702 through 1884. Stay tuned for more information on this project and our society's efforts to make King William County's history accessible to everyone.

NEW PROJECT: *Public Archaeology at the King William County Courthouse*

The King William County Historical Society has teamed up with DATA Investigations LLC to conduct the first archaeological survey of the King William County Courthouse Complex. The complex includes the oldest, continuously active courthouse in the country and has been the subject of a handful of in-depth architectural analyses. Often the reference point connecting family and county-wide histories, it has never been the subject of an archaeological excavation. In the fall, DATA Investigations (a community-focused cultural resource management firm) will work with the historical society to publicize several excavation opportunities where the public can work alongside professional archaeologists as they recover artifacts and other archaeological evidence from the site. The purpose of the survey is to engage the public in understanding the complex and fascinating history of the site, help answer questions about how this important center of county politics and society changed over time, and help King William County plan for protecting its archaeological resources in the future. Stay tuned for more information in our next newsletter to learn how you can watch and participate in discovering King William County's history.

Minutes of the King William County Historical Society Membership Meeting

Sunday, April 28, 2019

The Membership Meeting of the King William County Historical Society was held at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 28, 2019 at Seven Springs in Manquin, Virginia. There were approximately 40 members and guests present.

President Sally Pearson called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. and welcomed members and guests. She thanked our host Brett Hunnicutt for hosting the meeting at Seven Springs. She advised that our next meeting will be a picnic on Sunday, July 21st, at Windsor Shades, the home of Carl and Lynn Fischer.

The Minutes of the January 20, 2018 Membership Meeting were approved as submitted.

President Pearson outlined the following open items:

- Transcription of the burned records/deed books: The records are in the process of transcription and will be searchable, in a manner similar to a Google search, making them easy to use. Vice President Rhonda Sonnenberg noted that a Request for Proposal had gone out and from the submittals received a transcriber and editor were selected. There are 10 deed books.
- Fiber/Internet to Museum: Fiber is being installed in the Museum to provide high speed internet service.
- The Future Farmers of America group is building wooden benches for the old Courthouse area.
- The Museum is in need of docents for Sunday afternoons.

Treasurer Ron Parker's report shows the following balances as of April 28, 2019:

Checking	\$8,196.11
Museum Savings CD	\$20,779.95
Church Maintenance	\$3,355.32
Wells Fargo Museum Fund	\$139,002.05
Total	\$171,333.43

Program: Vice President Rhonda Sonnenberg introduced our speaker, Brett Hunnicutt, owner of Seven Springs. She noted that Seven Springs is significant for the KWHS due to prior ownership by Alma and Harry Koon, who made provision for an endowment to bestow an annual grant to the Society.

Brett Hunnicutt thanked us for visiting. He discussed how he found the property and purchased it in 2015, his plans for its use as a business and his interest in maintaining the historic property. Now the property is primarily used as a wedding and event venue. The main house was built c. 1725-1740 and owned originally by Captain George Dabney. Mr. Hunnicutt discussed features of the house and outbuildings and their origin and renovations through the years, through several owners and periods of disuse. Mr. Coon began meticulous custom renovations in 1983. Mr. Hunnicutt has made few changes with the exception of the event pavilion and livestock areas. One feature of the property today is the flock of Hog Island sheep, a rare and endangered breed. Mr. Hunnicutt invited us to tour the property.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m. and refreshments were served.

Respectfully submitted:

Lisa Vawter, Corresponding Secretary

PALESTINE

Recently the Historical Society received an inquiry from a woman whose family were the last to occupy the house called "Palestine" in the northwest corner of King William County. KWCHS Member Bob Hubbard shared some interesting details about the house and owners through the years.

Palestine, c. 1770, was located off of present day Herring Creek Road. Per Bob: "Captain John Fox, who built our home Roseville in 1807, died in 1814. At that time he owned 1,457 acres in the surrounding area of Herring Creek. Over the next several years, much of that property was sold as part of the estate settlement - the "Palestine" track included. His son Richard Woolfolk Fox bought the property back in 1846. The house operated as a school for many years. Richard, his wife, his father John and John's two wives are all buried at the "Retreat Fox Family Cemetery" - one mile down the road."

Richard Woolfolk Fox (1795-1864) was educated at the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1825. He was a physician for over 40 years, as well as conducting the Palestine Female Institute. William Woolfolk Fox II (1851-1914) was a teacher in Caroline County and school superintendent in King William County. Many of the Fox family were members of Corinth Christian Church and some were buried there.



A description of the house from "Some Fox Trails in Old Virginia": The "Palestine" house, though now in a state of decay, was until recently quite attractive. It is a story and a half in height, built in two adjoining sections set at right angles to each other. There are three huge chimneys, three dormer windows in the front, and small windows in the gables. The back roof comes low to cover a long porch. The house has nine rooms and a long hall connecting the front porch with the back; and two stairways, one, enclosed, running from the "chamber: to the "girls' room" above.

Apparently the property was purchased by the Chesapeake Corporation in the 1950s and the house was razed. The photo Bob Hubbard provided is from the 1930s.

Thanks to Bob Hubbard and Ron Parker for their research.

Sources include:

Some Fox Trails in Old Virginia, compiled by Ellen M. Cocke, The Dietz Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1939; Old New Kent County, Dr. Malcolm Harris, 1977

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual Membership expires twelve (12) months after your last dues payment.

Family \$30

Student \$10

Individual \$20

Lifetime \$250

Artifact Level \$150+

Pamunkey/Mattaponi Level \$300+

Thomas T. H. Hill Benefactor Level
\$500+

Corporate Sponsorship \$500+

Mail to:

King William Historical Society
P.O. Box 233
King William, VA 23086



*The King William Museum is open Sundays from
1:00 - 5:00 PM and by prearranged appointment
(closed on major holidays).*

*Located at 227 Horse Landing Road,
King William, Virginia*



We are not makers of history. We are made by history.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

