

KING WILLIAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter
October 2022

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UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 16, 2022, 2:30 PM
Annual Picnic at "Retreat"
4783 Herring Creek Road
Aylett, Virginia 23181

Please join us at the next membership meeting of the King William County Historical Society on Sunday, October 16th at 2:30 at Retreat in Mangohick. Owners Janie and Meade Rhoads will share the history of their home, parts of which were built in 1808 by J.F. Fox. After the meeting, members will be able to tour the home and cemetery followed by our annual picnic. Fried chicken, iced tea and water will be provided by the Society. Please bring a dish to share.

Directions: From Aylett, turn left on to State Rte. 600 (W River Road), then drive about 10 miles and turn left onto State Rte. 604 (Herring Creek Rd). Drive another 1/10th of a mile and turn right into the driveway at 4783 Herring Creek Rd.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Membership,

It is an honor to once again be the president of the King William County Historical Society. I am sincerely grateful for the leadership of Sally Pearson as she carefully navigated our organization through the pandemic. As we look to the future, we have great prospects for doing exciting things that will benefit not only you but all of King William County and those who live beyond our borders who share a passion for our county's history. Over the last year our Board of Directors have worked diligently with our county administration, revising our lease agreement and finalizing the technology agreement that will not only provide all of us with certainty and consistency but also share the burden of these responsibilities. Our county administrator, Percy Ashcraft, and his team have shown the utmost professionalism and patience with us throughout negotiations and we consider them to be our partners in the care and interpretation of the courthouse historic area as well as promoting our county heritage. We are excited to share that these collaborative ventures will continue both with public archaeology dig days and brainstorming how we can preserve and interpret the iconic fire lookout tower nearby in 2023.

Over the next two years of my term as president it is my sincere hope that we can expand our membership while continuing to provide fascinating lectures at our membership meetings and sponsor innovative projects that build an appreciation for and greater access to the history of King William County. As membership grows, we hope to involve more of you in these exciting projects and hear from you about the wonderful ideas you have for making our society even better. As you read over this newsletter, please take a moment to appreciate the hard work of Lisa Vawter who has put together this issue and others over the last few years. Lisa is shifting to recording secretary and we are looking for someone to help fill the corresponding secretary position moving forward. Please take a moment to consider getting involved.

Please know that I welcome your thoughts and criticisms and my door is always open. I have loved being a part of this society since I moved to the county over a decade ago. I am excited to help in whatever way I can and look forward to seeing all of you at our next membership meeting.

Dave



Archaeology Update

We continue to have amazing discoveries nearly every day we are at the courthouse Tavern site. Over the last two months we have continued our excavation in search of the iconic building and it's many outbuildings. Our excavations included children, archaeological certification technicians from the Archaeological Society of Virginia, professionals, and visitors who came by just to see what we found that day. It has been a delight to meet so many different people. And nearly each day the museum has opened thanks to Debi Moren, providing visitors and volunteers with the opportunity to see the amazing exhibit highlighting colonial taverns alongside our wonderful exhibit on King William County.

Each excavation unit has revealed another piece of the puzzle. We are slowly uncovering foundations for outbuildings which may have included sheds, slave quarters, a kitchen, etc. In each case the foundation was too narrow to support a two-story building, like we know the tavern once was. The brick foundations are surrounded by artifacts that largely date to the mid 18th century through the early 19th century, which was the heyday of the tavern. The sheer diversity of ceramics highlights the high-status nature of the clientele, although it is clear that people from all walks of life were at the tavern. Poor people, middling planters, and the counties' elite... Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans and African-Americans, and those of European descent... All of them crossed paths here. Colonoware, Tin-glazed earthenware, North Midland slipware, German stoneware, and so much more.

Perhaps our greatest discovery so far has been what we believe is the tavern itself. The foundation is substantial enough to bear the weight of a two-story, frame structure, and deep enough for a shallow cellar. Beneath layers of brick rubble is an ash and charcoal deposit from the late 19th century, matching the description in Alonso Dill's book about the courthouse area where he states the tavern burned about that time. In the burnt wreckage are many melted glass and ceramic vessels, Iron nails and remnants of wood beams, and two rather unique items: many fragments of marble and whelk. The marble is clearly part of either a mantle or furniture top, although it is now very fragile as marble does not react well to fire. It is unclear why there is whelk in this deposit. There are at least four examples. Was it remnants of a meal? Were these somehow decorative in nature? Stay tuned as we research these deposits with the hope of solving this mystery.

We welcome you and the general public to join us for our future excavation days. We will be there from 10 until four on the second and fourth Thursdays in October and November, although not Thanksgiving 😊. You can try your hands at screening, digging or washing artifacts we recovered. Even as the weather gets colder we will do our best To continue these days and make the site accessible to everyone so they can participate and learn from professionals who specialize in public archaeology. There is nothing quite like the thrill of rediscovering the past. We look forward to seeing you on site in the months to come.

- *Dave Brown*

MEMBER NEWS



The two images above are from the burn layer of the tavern. The first one shows the charred remains of a wooden furniture leg. The second one shows archaeologists excavating fragments of marble from beneath the tavern.



Volunteers working in the cellar, left, and volunteers and a certification student at the dig, right.

Corresponding Secretary Needed

We need your help in filling the position of Corresponding Secretary. Amanda Walker was planning to take the role, but new professional and personal obligations have prevented that. We wish her well in her new endeavors.

Who do you know who may be interested? The corresponding secretary produces the quarterly newsletter, and occasionally corresponds with donors and members. It is interesting to be part of the activities of the Society and gratifying to help it succeed. Please contact Lisa Vawter at 804-387-1241 with any questions.

Time to Pay Dues

Our treasurer, Sally Pearson, reminds us that, if you have not done so already, it is time to pay your dues. Individual dues are \$20 and family dues \$30 annually. Bring your check to the meeting at Retreat on October 16th, or mail your check made out to King William County Historical Society to P. O. Box 233, King William, VA 23086.

New County Entrance Signs

Recently the county administration replaced entrance signs to the county on routes 30 and 360. The Historical Society is contributing to this effort.



KING WILLIAM COUNTY CEMETERIES

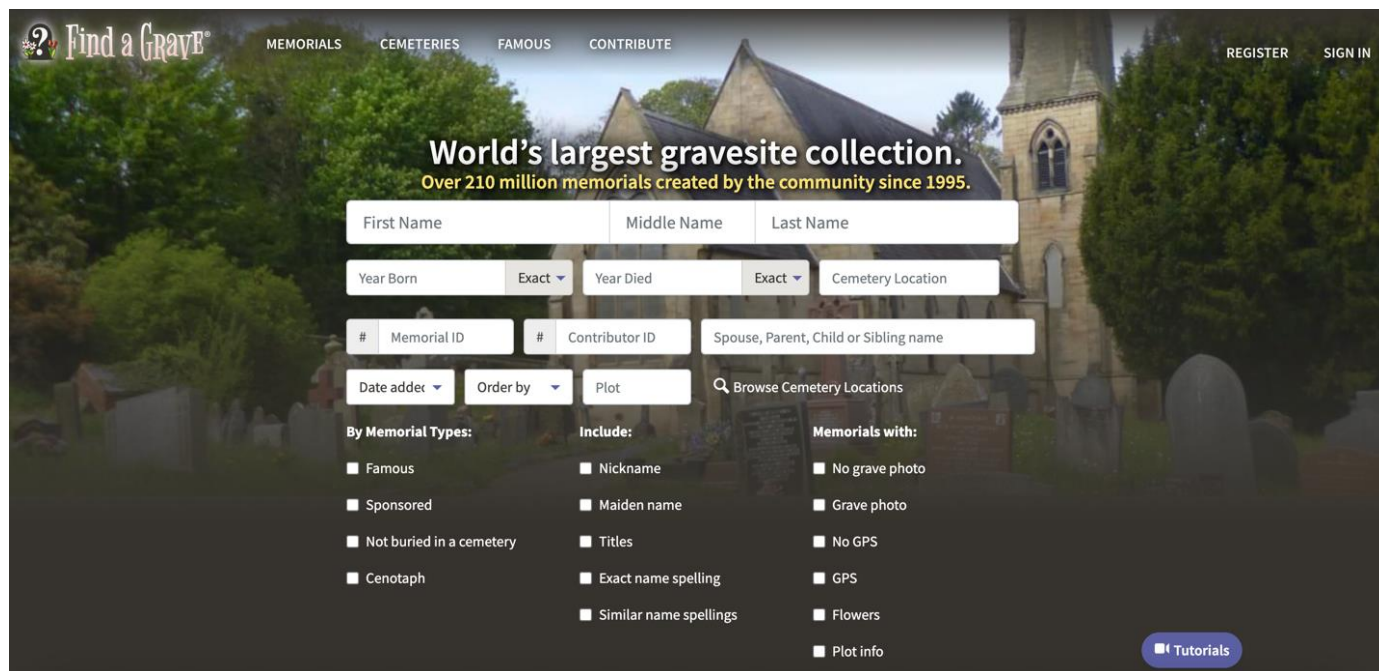
Did you know there are 135 cemeteries identified in King William County that include thousands of memorials that can be view online? For many years the King William County Historical Society documented private cemeteries (plantations, churches, etc.) and in 1995 published a book titled “Old King William County Cemeteries”. J. Jarvis Taylor wrote in the Introduction of this book, “Old cemeteries are a valuable source of historical information and genealogical research. Every effort should be made to locate, restore and maintain them, and record their history for posterity. This work is incomplete ... indeed, no work of this kind can possibly be completed.”

In 2011 there was an effort initiated by the society to update this book but the committee decided to take a different approach to creating a paper document that is not only costly to produce, but difficult to distribute. Bob Hubbard and Ron Parker took on the effort to move all the entries in our society’s book into an existing online system called Find-a-Grave. Ron continues to create new cemeteries and update memorials in existing cemeteries as they are identified. If anyone knows of additional cemeteries or grave sites in King William County, please contact Ron at: kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org

Find-a-Grave allows the viewing of all cemeteries in a locality or you can search by cemetery name (often a home place name) or by family name:

https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/search?name=&locationId=county_2852&page=1#cem-2442372

- *Bob Hubbard*



The image shows the search interface of the Find a Grave website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for MEMORIALS, CEMETERIES, FAMOUS, and CONTRIBUTE. On the right side, there are links for REGISTER and SIGN IN. The main heading reads "World's largest gravesite collection." followed by the subtitle "Over 210 million memorials created by the community since 1995." Below this, there is a search form with several input fields: First Name, Middle Name, Last Name, Year Born (with an Exact dropdown), Year Died (with an Exact dropdown), Cemetery Location, Memorial ID, Contributor ID, and Spouse, Parent, Child or Sibling name. There are also dropdown menus for Date added, Order by, and Plot. A "Browse Cemetery Locations" button is present. At the bottom, there are three columns of checkboxes for filtering results: "By Memorial Types" (Famous, Sponsored, Not buried in a cemetery, Cenotaph), "Include:" (Nickname, Maiden name, Titles, Exact name spelling, Similar name spellings), and "Memorials with:" (No grave photo, Grave photo, No GPS, GPS, Flowers, Plot info). A "Tutorials" button is located in the bottom right corner.

MINUTES

King William County Historical Society Membership Meeting Minutes Sunday, April 10, 2022

The King William County Historical Society membership meeting was held on Sunday, April 10, 2022. President Sally Pearson called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm. Sally noted that the next day, April 11, 2022, marks the celebration of the 320th anniversary of King William County. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

John Breeden advised that Burned Record Book 3 has been completed and we are looking for transcribers and editors for Book 4. He also advised that the Board had approved the use of ground penetrating radar to attempt to discover the foundations of the colonial tavern.

Lisa Vawter reported from the Nominating Committee the slate of officers for the next biennium, to be voted on at the July membership meeting. The Nominees are President: David Brown, Vice-President: Morgan Faulkner, Treasurer: Sally Pearson, Corresponding Secretary: Amanda Walker, Recording Secretary: Lisa Vawter, At-Large: Benjamin Shumaker, Carl Fischer, Bob Hubbard and Parliamentarian: John Breeden.

Bibb Edwards was involved in starting the burned records transcription project, and he has electronic, scanned files of each page of the tax records, to the extent they are available, from 1782-1927. He will be happy to copy these for the price of a flash drive. He can be reached by phone or email.

Rose Bloomfield requested prayers for family members in Ukraine and thanked Gene Campbell for writing articles of historical interest for the Country Courier.

John Breeden introduced our speaker, Dr. Alvin Lomax. Dr. Lomax was born and reared in King William and attended King William schools, The Hampton Institute and the College of William and Mary. He worked for many years at Norfolk State University. His topic was "Evolution and Implementation of Formal Education for African Americans from 1869 through 1960". Dr Lomax spoke about the development of the school systems and enforcement of school policies during the period. The focus of Dr. Lomax's presentation was on the King William County educational system, but he also discussed developments across the Commonwealth during those years. The purpose of education is to provide experiences that will help a person make rational decisions throughout his or her life. There were three periods of formal education in the United States: the English classical system, the Academy movement and the High School movement.

In King William there were limited opportunities for education for African Americans. The African American churches here were critical pioneers in establishing education opportunities for people in their congregations. Dr. Lomax spoke about Dr. Samuel Holmes who had the third Union Academy on his property. Also discussed were the Rosenwald Schools, named after mentor Julius Rosenwald, whose foundation helped to establish schools for African Americans in rural communities in the 1920s and 1930s.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Vawter
Corresponding Secretary

MINUTES

King William County Historical Society Membership Meeting Minutes Sunday, July 17, 2022

The King William County Historical Society membership meeting was held on Sunday, July 17, 2022. President Sally Pearson called the meeting to order at 2:36 pm.

The slate of officers from the nominating committee, for the new biennium, was approved unanimously. They are:

President: David Brown
Vice-President: Morgan Faulkner
Corresponding Secretary: Amanda Walker
Treasurer: Sally Pearson
Recording Secretary: Lisa Vawter
At Large: Benjamin Shumaker
At Large: Carl Fischer
At Large: Bob Hubbard
Parliamentarian: John Breeden

The next membership meeting will be held at Retreat in upper King William on July 16th, where we plan to share a picnic.

Sally thanked the membership for helping through the last four years of her presidency, and is particularly grateful that we were able to adapt during the difficult time of Covid.

The program for the day was the Grand Re-Opening of the museum, highlighting the new colonial period tavern exhibit. To start off the festivities, Debi Moren, Martha Anne Hart, Rebecca Townsend and Michael Hart portrayed colonial characters in colonial dress.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:50 p.m., and we went to the museum to tour the new exhibit.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Vawter
Corresponding Secretary



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

Acquinton Church on a foggy, fall morning



*The King William Museum is open on Sundays from
1:00 to 5:00 pm.
Located at 227 Horse Landing Road,
King William, Virginia*

King William County Historical Society

The King William County Historical Society was formed in 1973 to preserve and promote the unique heritage and rich history of King William County, Virginia through education, research, and restoration of historically significant landmarks.

Our mission is to collect, interpret, and preserve those things relative to the history of the county while acting as caretaker of artifacts from the lives and traditions of the people who have gone before us.

To this end our efforts are wide ranging, including our publications, operating the county historical museum, and the stabilization and restoration of King William landmarks such as the Old Jail, Lanesville Christadelphian Church, and Acquinton Church.

Membership is open to all who share a passion for history, a reverence for the past, and an interest in preserving our common heritage for future generations.