

KING WILLIAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly Newsletter
January 2024

IN THIS ISSUE

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETING

January 21, 2024, 2:30 PM
Mangohick Baptist Church
147 Mangohick Church Road
Hanover, VA 23069

Please join us at the next meeting of the King William County Historical Society which will be held on Sunday, January 21st at 2:30. This will be an in-person meeting at Mangohick Baptist Church in upper King William County. Mangohick Baptist Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. It was built in 1730 and remains in active use today. At this meeting members of the Church will share about the history of the building and congregation. Please join us for an afternoon to learn more about one of the oldest churches in our area. Light refreshments will be available after the presentation.



P.2: The President's
Message

P. 3: Transcription
Project

P. 4: Archaeology
Update

P. 6: Member News

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Membership,

Every year we get to the end of December and there is often a quiet time when we can reflect on the past year. While we often reserve November as a time to give thanks, I'm certainly feeling grateful through this month and reminded of how many wonderful people we've had join us for our meetings, how we've been blessed with good weather and interesting lectures, and received generous support from many of you to help us achieve our goals. I thank each of you for your help and continued engagement.

This last year gave us a glimpse of what's to come, as much of the pandemic-period restrictions (although not the disease) have left us and we look towards a new sense of normal. We can rely on our museum council and the continued care and maintenance (and sharing) of our county's history through exhibits and skillful curation. We can rely on our board of directors, guiding our work with the community, leading preservation projects, and serving as good stewards for our dedicated funds. And we can rely on continuing projects (and new ones) that will bring excitement through new discoveries.

In this newsletter you'll be welcome to read about many topics that show how busy our board and museum have been - and our regular appeal for more of you to become involved (especially as we look to bring on new board members in 2024). We have an update on our transcription projects, making accessible in key-word searchable form the initial books of the "burned" King William County Records. We also have an update on the nomination of the King William Courthouse Historic District to the state and federal registers of historic places. We include some wonderful pictures of artifacts found by Fairfield Foundation volunteers and staff, who continue to offer public archaeology opportunities to the public on every 2nd and 4th Thursday. And in our NEXT newsletter we hope to share with you an update on a recent initiative with Kenah Consulting and the three Indigenous tribes in King William County.

As I wrap up this year's thoughts, though, I am reminded of the great joy and honor being in this position has given me. I will forever be a "come here", but through the kindness of so many of you, and gentle prodding and kidding of several others, I can honestly say that King William is a warm and caring community and I enjoy being president of this historical society - giving what I can to all of you and looking forward to a fun and rewarding 2024.

Sincerely,
Dr. David A. Brown, President

TRANSCRIPTION PROJECT

Update on the Transcription Project

We've done our best to keep things moving smoothly in 2023 and we thought it might be beneficial to give a more direct and detailed summary of our recent work and plans for the year ahead - knowing that many of you are still curious as to just what this project is all about...and how might it benefit each of you (and those you know).

To date we've completed and offer for sale the following books:

- Book One, 1702 - 1707 - 376 page images
- Book Two, 1702 - 1706, 1721 - 1722, 1785 - 1786 - 267 page images

We've also completed the transcription and editing for the following additional books and hope to offer them for sale in 2024:

- Book Three, 1783 - 1800 - 474 page images
- Book Four, 1800 - 1805 - 380 page images
- Book Six, 1811 - 1816 - 517 page images

Lastly, we've completed the transcription of the following book and plan to edit and format it for sale in 2024:

- Book Five, 1806 - 1810 - 480 page images

While we may not be able to keep up this pace with new transcriptions in 2024, we remain optimistic. The following books are either under contract for transcription or will be put out to bid for transcription in 2024 and hopefully available for purchase in early 2025.

- Book Seven, Parts 1 & 2, 1816-1819 - 531 page images (under contract)
- Book Eight, 1819 -1822 - 504 page images (RFP in 2024)
- Book Nine, Parts 1 & 2, 1835 - 1837 - 550 page images (RFP in 2024)

Thank you for all of the words of encouragement and support on this endeavor. With 19 books in total, the multi-year project is intended to connect the public with vital historic records that will link them with their history. Please reach out to us to acquire your own copies of these transcribed documents. And if you don't want to wait, you can also purchase all 19 books in image form (not transcribed; not keyword searchable) on a single thumbdrive (9000 pages!) from us, too.

Sincerely,

Dr. David A. Brown and John Breeden, Transcription Committee

Each copy costs \$50 with the proceeds supporting the King William County Museum. For purchase, please email kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org.

Update on Archaeology at the King William Courthouse

We continue to have public archaeology days at the King William Courthouse from 10-4 every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month. We greatly appreciate the county cross-promoting this, helping us reach a greater group of citizens and others interested in King William County and its history. Most important, we are proud to announce these events will continue through the next year as we look deeper into the forest, finish our survey of the open lawn across Courthouse Lane, and open one or two new test units on the sites further afield - namely Hill's Hotel and perhaps the brick stable lot. While our focus is still the Tavern, understanding the surrounding landscape is essential to our efforts to document and interpret the greater courthouse area.

This year's excavations focused on wrapping up our test unit into the tavern's southern cellar (see photo). As you can see, a dark layer of ash is at the bottom of this profile wall, marking the 1890s fire that consumed the building (but none of its occupants, luckily). We still find it strange that within this layer of soil were many fragments of conch shell. While native to this area (two different varieties, in fact), and occasionally harvested for eating, it is seldom found on archaeological sites - dwarfed in number by its fellow oyster and clam shells.

The artifacts recovered from this layer, and the brick rubble above it (from the building's destruction) help confirm that this was, indeed, the tavern. In addition to the conch shell (see photos), we've recovered a particular brand of shotgun shells common in the mid-1890s, as well as a Confederate Army Reunion Medal dated 1896, which confirms the remains of the building were taken down after this date. We also found a brass shutter catch, which helps us better understand how the exterior of the tavern looked (see photo). Curiously, the footprint of the tavern identified through Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) does not correspond to the dimensions mentioned in the 1770s Virginia Gazette article selling the establishment. Our best guess at the moment is that the earlier dimensions represent the building with additions, while the GPR was only able to identify the brick-lined cellar (which may not have extended across the entire building footprint).

Work expanded far beyond the cellar, though, both in the lab and the field. Volunteers helped wash artifacts, sort and weigh rubble, and Fairfield Foundation staff began cataloging the thousands of pieces recovered over the last few years. In the field, we focused on last May's successful kid's dig with 4th and 5th graders from across the county, completing the excavation units they started, including one that will examine the north gable of the tavern. Finally, our archaeological survey in the forest and open lawn continues to find surprises, including evidence of 18th-century occupations on the south side of Courthouse Lane and potentially more outbuildings in the forest east of the tavern. Please join us for our dig days in the winter and spring and for more information reach out to Dave at Dave@FairfieldFoundation.org.

On page 5 from upper left: Excavation of the southern cellar of the tavern, brass shutter catch, pieces of conch shell.

MEMBER NEWS



From the Treasurer

Please remit your dues:

Membership dues are:

\$20 Individual Membership for one Year

\$30 Family Membership for one Year

\$250 Individual Lifetime Membership

You may submit your dues to:

King William Historical Society

P O Box 233

King William, VA 23086

Or bring them to the meeting on January 21st. If you have questions as to whether your dues are current, please contact Sally Pearson at sallysgoldens@gmail.com

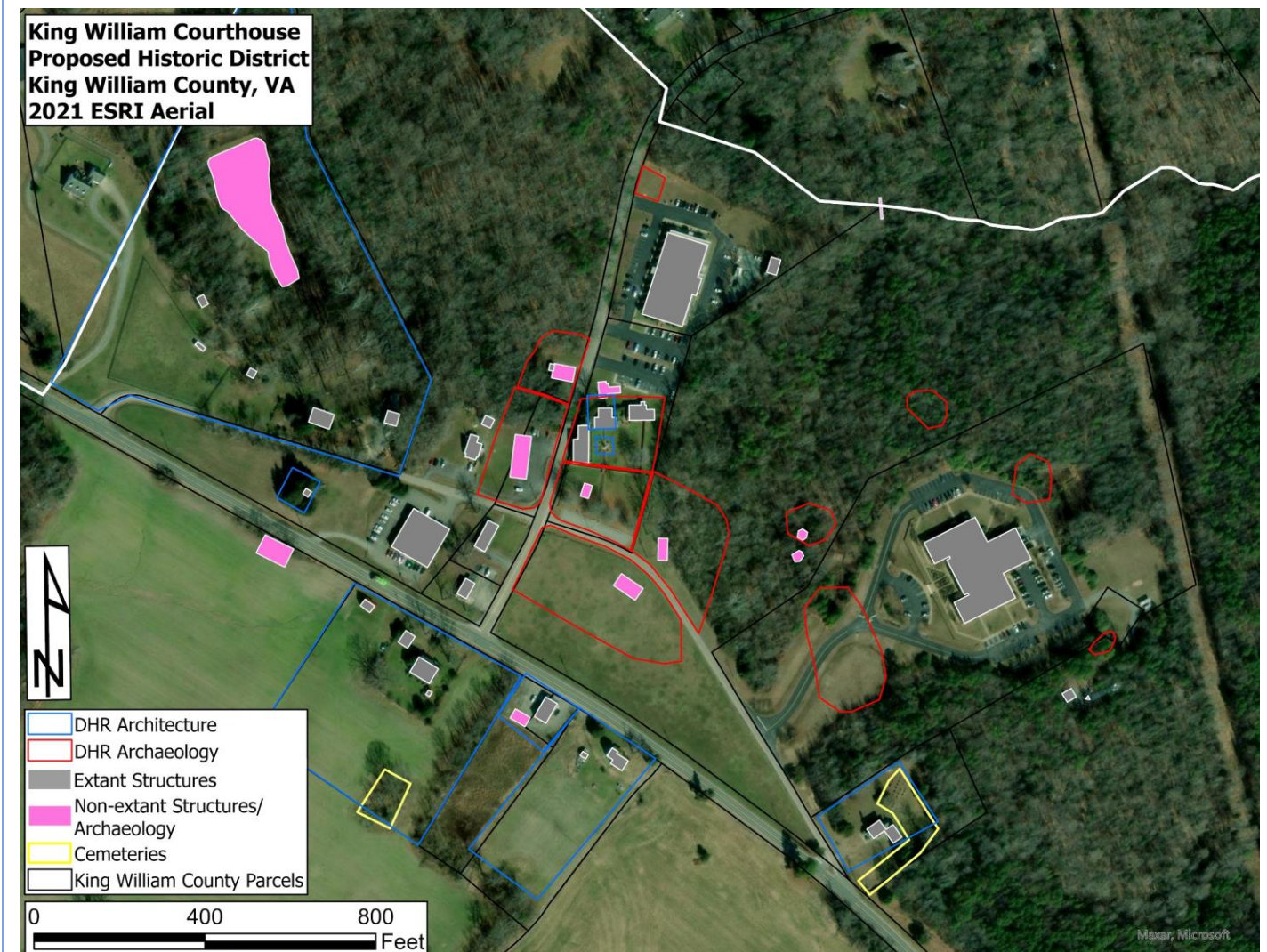
If you know of someone who would like to join, the membership form can be found here:

<https://kingwilliamhistory.org/membership/>

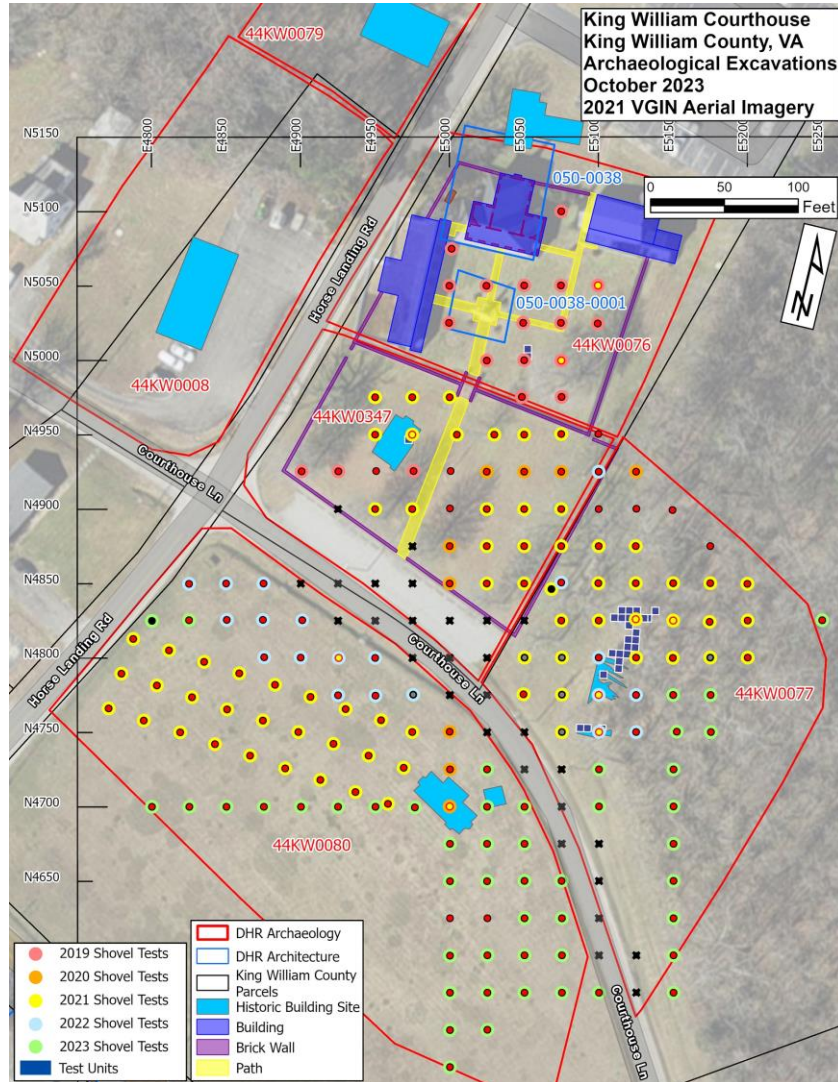
MEMBER NEWS

Update on the Preliminary Information Form (PIF) for the King William Courthouse Historic District

We are excited to announce that, with the encouragement of the county and our courthouse residents, we have successfully achieved "eligible" status for listing the King William Courthouse Historic District on the state and federal registers of historic places. While not the final step in this journey, we are happy to note that this is one of the most significant obstacles along the path. Our next and final step is preparing the official nomination for the district. The benefits for the property owners in the district are several, including the honor of being designated as well as access to building rehabilitation tax credits and protective easements (if the owners desire). We look forward to having the full nomination prepared and reviewed in 2024, continuing our work with the county and residents, documenting the architectural and archaeological resources throughout the district, and acknowledging the legacies of the many people and events that make this area significant and worthy of recognition.



MEMBER NEWS



Open Board Positions

There are presently two positions open on the King William County Historical Society Board of Directors: Corresponding Secretary and an At Large position. The primary duty of the corresponding secretary is producing the quarterly newsletter. Both the at large member and corresponding secretary attend board meetings and assist in running the business of the Society.

Do you know of anyone who may wish to help? You, perhaps? Please contact John Breeden or Lisa Vawter.

John can be reached at jljbreeden@aol.com or 804-338-6384, and Lisa at lilvawter@aol.com or 804-387-1241.

MEMBER NEWS

King William County Historical Society Membership Meeting Minutes Sunday, July 16, 2023

The King William County Historical Society membership meeting was held on Sunday, July 16, 2023 at the Lanesville Christadelphian Church. President David Brown called the meeting to order at approximately 2:40 pm.

President Brown shared updates with the members regarding the ongoing work of the Society, including “burned” records transcription, archaeological excavations and research, and education opportunities for schoolchildren on “dig days.”

The program was a discussion about the county's natural history, tribal history and cultures, maritime history, and current land use with John Page Williams and Tilghman Broaddus, of Marlbourne on the Pamunkey in Hanover County.

Mr. Williams is a noted writer, angler, educator, naturalist, and conservationist. In more than 40 years at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Virginia native championed the Bay's causes and educated countless people about its history and biology. Mr. Broaddus has lived on his family land his whole life and will also share his perspective on our county and two beautiful rivers.

There were approximately 28 members present.

The next membership meeting will be held on October 15, 2023.

King William County Historical Society Membership Meeting Minutes Sunday, October 15, 2023

The King William County Historical Society membership meeting was held on Sunday, October 15, 2023 at the Upper Mattaponi Tribal Grounds. President David Brown called the meeting to order at approximately 2:50 pm.

The minutes were tabled until the next meeting. The Treasurer's report was made available. President Brown reminded members of how we benefit from the Koon Fund, and he shared the Museum Report from Debi Moren. Elaine Ramsey shared that their home is now on the National Historic Register.

Morgan Faulkner provided information about the Mattaponi Tribal Grounds and gave a tour of the greenhouse and vegetable gardens. The membership enjoyed a picnic of fried chicken, side dishes and desserts. There were approximately 25 members and guests present.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Vawter
Recording 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

Gift to the King William County Historical Society



The Historical Society is grateful to have received a wonderful gift from Gwynn Litchfield. Mrs. Litchfield painted this beautiful watercolor of a tobacco barn near the courthouse. Mrs. Litchfield is an accomplished local artist who lives at her family home place in King and Queen County.

The King William Museum is open by appointment.

Call 804.769.9619 or email

kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org

*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.