



KING WILLIAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Spring, 2026 - Volume 18, Number 2

SPRING MEMBERSHIP MEETING = KING WILLIAM COUNTY HERITAGE DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026
KING WILLIAM COURT HOUSE

Plans are being finalized for King William Heritage Day on Saturday, April 11th, at the Courthouse, observing 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As the date for this event almost coincides with our usual Spring Membership Meeting - and many of our members are involved - we are joining our local King William VA250 Planning Committee to celebrate the rich history of King William County.

The day's festivities will kick off at 10 am and continue till 4 pm. The program will commence at 11 am, featuring the King William Community Band, a history of King William County, a musket exhibit, dancing, and remarks by the Chiefs of the local Upper Mattaponi and Pamunkey Native American tribes.

There will be ladies and gentlemen in period costumes, exhibits by local businesses and organizations, and food vendors offering a taste of local cuisine. It is rumored Carter Braxton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and George Washington may stop by. There should be something for everyone.

Visit the 'Tavern' in our Museum, stop by the KWCHS table, and learn about ongoing archaeological discoveries on our Courthouse grounds with Fairfield Foundation staff. So plan to spend the day on the grounds of the oldest courthouse still in continuous use in the United States. We look forward to seeing you.

For more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/p/King-William-County-VA250-61556211650686/>.

- Thanks to Gene Campbell, Debi Moren, Katie Gibson, and David Brown, who provided text and details above.

HERITAGE DAY EVENT

Join the **CELEBRATION!**

- Fun with Friends & Neighbors
- Period Authentic Actors & Speeches
- Food Trucks and Merchant Vendors
- Celebrating America's 250th Birthday

The United States of America's **250TH BIRTHDAY**

April 11, 2026
10am- 4pm

VIRGINIA'S HISTORY IS AMERICA'S STORY

Event to be held at our treasured King William County Historic Courthouse

Poster created by Sam Drewry, King William VA250 Planning Committee

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have a confession to make. I am not well versed in King William County's history. At least not to the level of Steve Colvin, Lloyd Huckstep, Bob Hubbard, Dr. Alvin Lomax, Marie Jennings, most of our Museum Council, and, of course, Bibb Edwards. I don't have the benefits of having been born/raised in the county and most of my research since undergrad focuses on the lower Middle Peninsula, specifically Gloucester County. But when I moved to the county with my wife and we bought a house spitting distance from the historic courthouse, I instantly became a fan.

When I joined the historical society board, I looked for a way to lend my expertise in archaeology and historic preservation to the cause. High on my list was the courthouse district, understanding the history of the county's governmental center, including its architecture, landscape, and most importantly, its people.

As of this newsletter, I'm proud to report that we've completed the draft nomination of the King William County Courthouse Historic District to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. After informal reviews by both the historical society and the historic preservation and architectural review board, we now await review by the staff of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

In the months ahead, you will see updates on the nomination, including where you can download a copy and provide your comments. The designation is purely honorific, providing property owners with preservation incentives (if they wish to pursue them) and formally recognizing the integrity and significance of these amazing buildings, structures, and sites. It has been a joy to work with them to learn about their properties.

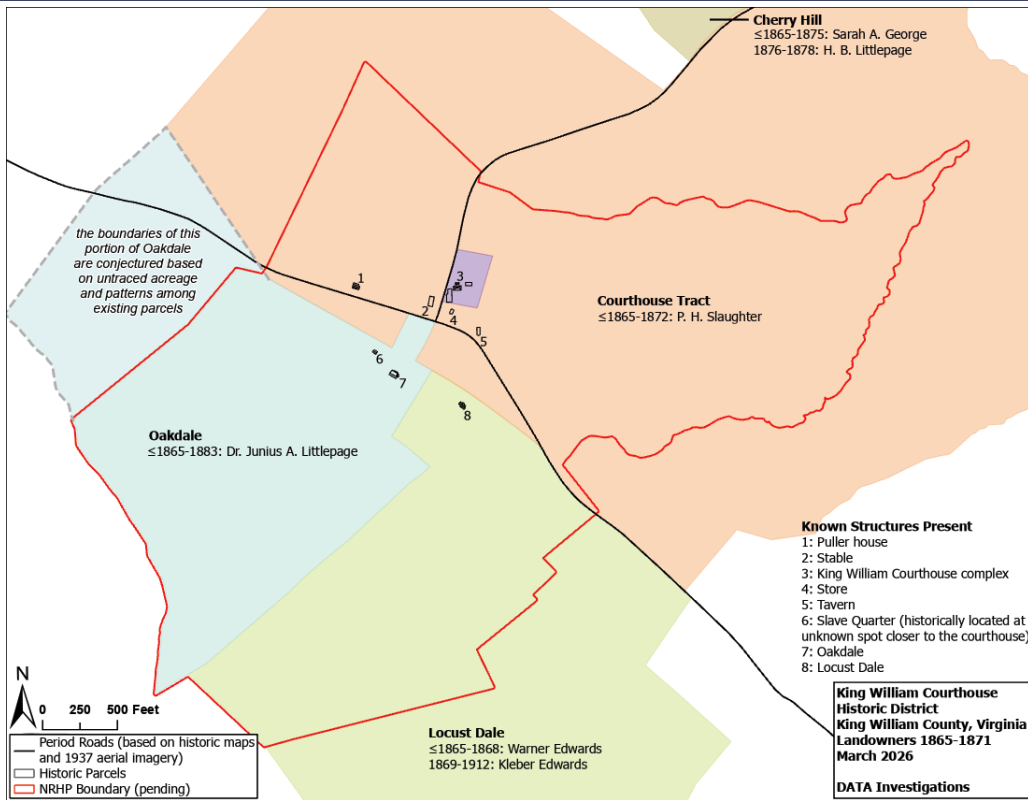
Our conversations revealed a recurring interest: how did property ownership change over time? And where did one property start (or end)? We created a complimentary study of "who owned what? and when?" The key to this study would be the creation of maps, some of which we've included in this newsletter. Landownership is complicated. It is far easier to show it than describe it. And it is far easier to find the missing puzzle piece when you know where and how big it is.

Creating the maps wasn't without its unique frustrations. We had to keep the study area reasonable, leaving some important properties out. It took forever to find references to buildings built, modified, or lost, and some still elude us. In the end, this cartographic history will never be complete, but we have rediscovered some very interesting things: a) Rt. 30 was built/redirected in 1930, which is now much easier to remember, b) the fire tower was built in 1935, and c) we still have three of the four major houses that defined the district, but all three taverns/hotels/ordinaries, several stores, and our original clerk's office weren't so lucky. And we've only begun to connect these places with the people who made them - the Pullers, Foxes, Littlepages, Slaughters, Lacys, and many others both free and enslaved, tenants and landowners, artisans, tavern keepers, and more.

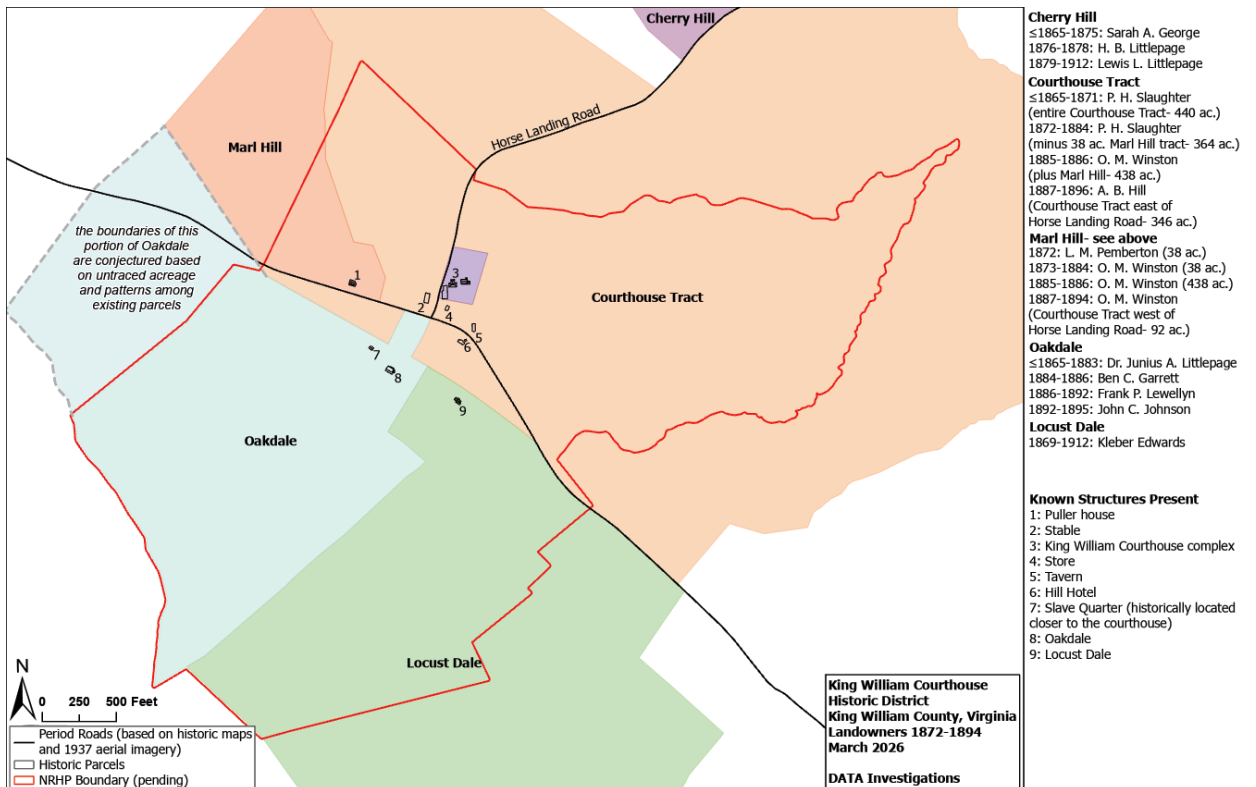
The stories of these individuals come alive through what they made and left behind. Every day I turn off Rt. 30 and head to my house (just outside of the district). I am in awe of our quiet but impressive courthouse district. I am lucky to live here and raise my family surrounded by history. And it is an honor to be part of the society that helps rediscover and preserve this history for our members and the future.

Sincerely, Dr. David A. Brown, President

RESEARCH



The earliest of the several property ownership maps developed for the King William County Courthouse Historic District nomination. Comments welcomed!



MUSEUM

Please join us Saturday, April 11, 2026, 10 AM to 4 PM, as King William VA250 celebrates Heritage Day Festival at the Old Court House Complex. Enjoy Historical activities, Presentations, and Speeches. Learn more about Carter Braxton, signer of the Declaration of Independence. See where the Gregory Tavern stood, where George Washington stayed, and an exhibit of what a Tavern in the day would look like. - Debi Moren, Museum Chair

Take the King William and Virginia 250 Challenge.

This quiz is designed to test your knowledge of the history of King William County, Virginia, and the United States. Please send your answers to Jessy Reed at Castinthruhistory13@gmail.com. The first 2 who answer correctly will win a prize. The winners will be announced at the July meeting. Good Luck.

- 1) True or False: Virginia is known as a “Commonwealth” because its Founders in the 1776 state constitution adopted the term. It signifies a “republic” or “body politic” that serves the people. It implies a strong, direct link between the government and the welfare of its residents and is rooted in revolutionary-era ideals.
- 2) When did Virginia become a colony?
- 3) Who founded Jamestown?
- 4) True or False: Delaware Town was established in 1691 by Lord Delaware on 50 acres of land at the confluence of the Pamunkey and the Mattaponi.
- 5) What are the first 3 words of the Constitution?
- 6) What did the Declaration of Independence do?
- 7) What is the name of the Tavern that George Washington would visit in King William County?
- 8) Who lived in America before Europeans arrived?
- 9) What is a Rosenwald School? How many were in King William? Can you name them?
- 10) Who was the Queen of the Pamunkey, an astute leader and skillful politician? She was instrumental in and signer of the “Treaty of the Middle Plantation”.
- 11) When was the King William County Coat of Arms presented by the Richmond Herald of Arms from the College of Arms in London?
- 12) Who was the County named after?
- 13) Who was John Hancock?
- 14) When was the Declaration of Independence approved?
- 15) Did anyone from King William County sign the Declaration of Independence? Do you know when he signed?
- 16) Where is the “Oldest Courthouse in Continuous use”?
- 17) Why is Virginia known as the “Mother of Presidents”?
- 18) Can you name 4 Presidents that were born in Virginia?
- 19) Can you name the first of the “13 Original Colonies”?
- 20) What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?

Bonus Question: When was the King William Historical Society founded? By whom?

CORRESPONDENCE

The KWCHS receives \$2,500 Donation

Nancy Seiler, a Lifetime Member from Maryland, recently presented the KWCHS with a gift of \$2,500. We asked her to introduce herself. Nancy responded:

Hi Bibb, this is my story.

I have always lived in Maryland. I was born in Baltimore, grew up in Kensington, lived in Frederick for 30 years, and now live in a retirement community in Westminster. I graduated from Columbia Union College with a degree in Health Care Administration. However, I had started working for the Federal Government during the summers, so I continued working for various agencies until I took early retirement to return to my first love. I then worked at Sibley Memorial Hospital in DC and Frederick Memorial Hospital in Frederick. When I ended my work career, I started traveling and saw a lot of the world. I also became interested in archaeology and genealogy.

I have only one grandparent born in America (Baltimore). The others were born in Germany. My King William relatives are Sarah (Sally) George of Horse Landing Road and Sterling S. Thornton, who lived across from the entrance to the Mattiponi Indian Reservation. Sterling's mother was Judith Coleman Pemberton, who had deep roots in KWC. Sterling was active in the county, and his name often appears in KWC documents and papers. Sterling married Sally's daughter, Virginia. My Great-Grandfather was their son, George.

When I discovered my great-grandfather was born in King William County, I found it exciting that I could drive to see where and how my family had lived. As a next step, I joined the KWCHS. Since then, I have been to King William numerous times, sometimes as a

destination, other times just driving through. At the 300th Anniversary Heritage Day, I was joined by 3 cousins. Our great-grandparents were siblings. I have been able to attend a couple of quarterly meetings, tour houses and churches, visit both Indian Reservations, and sometimes just roam around the county.

I decided I would make a donation after reading David Brown's President's Message in the April 2024 newsletter, citing all the financial responsibilities of the Society. I met David years ago at the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Va., when he gave a presentation to a very small group on the Rosewell ruins and the Fairfield Foundation. I was pleased when he became a part of KWCHS. I know my donation would be well spent on something important to me.

The donation itself has come from my IRA's RMD (*Required Minimum Distribution*). Previously, I had used that money for travel. Since travel has become more difficult, it was time to find another way to use it. I know how hard everyone works to keep the Society running smoothly, and all the hours it takes. Not to mention the projects. I know I am fortunate, and as hokey as it may sound, it does give me great joy to make this donation. Hopefully, I'll be able to do it again in the future.

- Nancy

I know I can speak for the entire board and membership of the society when I say "Thank you, Nancy" for the generous donation and for sharing your story with all of us. You are a model for all of us who love history and want to support our local historical societies. I know that many of you feel the same way as Nancy, and you want to make a difference in your community. Consider making a charitable contribution to the organizations you love through your IRA's RMD. These gifts help in immeasurable ways. - David

\$ TREASURER'S REPORT ¢

Account	Balance (03/15/2026)
Checking	\$920.62
Museum Savings CD	\$11,734.86
Wells Fargo Brokerage Account	\$206,172.00
Wells Fargo Coon Fund Money Market	\$88,205.74
PayPal Balance	\$1,243.03

~ DONATIONS ~

Please consider donating to the King William County Historical Society. You can do this easily online by visiting

<https://kingwilliamhistory.org/donate>

If you have a project in mind for the Society to undertake that you would like to financially support, let's talk.

BURNED RECORDS TRANSCRIPTIONS

Books 1 through 4 & 6 are complete and available for purchase. \$20.00 for each transcribed book with a media charge of \$10 for orders under \$40. Contact John Breeden at jljbreeden@aol.com for details and orders.

Visit Us!

In Person: King William County Historical Museum
227 Horse Landing Road, King William, VA
Phone: (804) 769-9619

Online: <https://kingwilliamhistory.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/kingwillcoHS>

Email: kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org

And Our Neighbors...

Pamunkey Indian Museum and Cultural Center
<https://pamunkey.org/museum-cultural-center>
Historical Society of West Point, Virginia
<https://hswpva.org>

King & Queen Historical Society / Tavern Museum
<https://www.kingandqueenmuseum.org>

New Kent Historical Society / Museum
<https://www.newkenthistoricalsoc.com>

Hanover County Historical Society
<https://hanoverhistorical.org>

Caroline County Historical Society
<https://www.facebook.com/CarolineHistoricalSociety>

MEMBERSHIP

DUES

Individual (Year).....\$20
Family Membership (Year).....\$30
Individual Lifetime.....\$250

Checks can be sent to:

King William Historical Society
PO Box 233
King William, VA 23086

We also accept dues through **PayPal**.
(A PayPal account is not necessary)

Scan our QRCode below

Membership Dues



Or visit

<https://kingwilliamhistory.org/dues>

Yearly memberships run for one year from the date
we receive your dues.

For membership questions please contact

Sally Pearson at

treasurer@kingwilliamhistory.org

If you are receiving this newsletter via the US Postal
Service but wish to receive an electronic copy
instead, please email us at

kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org

If you are a member and are not receiving a
newsletter, let us know! If you do not wish to receive
this newsletter, let us know that too.

MINUTES & Other Business

Membership Meeting Minutes Sunday, January 18, 2026

The King William County Historical Society members met on Sunday, January 18th, 2026, in the board meeting room of the King William County Administrative building in King William County, Virginia. President Dave Brown called the meeting to order at 2:36 pm. The minutes from the October 19, 2024, membership meeting were approved.

Sally Pearson provided copies of the Treasurer's report and shared there is a total of \$326,615.41 in the accounts.

President David Brown shared that some of the Deed Book transcriptions are available for purchase on thumb drives. Editor Wes Pippenger was in attendance for the meeting. Thank you, Wes and Bill Bynum, for all your work on the project! Other projects in the pipeline include the African American Oral History project, the King William Historical Homes book project, and the Love sign project.

Debi Moren shared some updates on the museum. Debi, Anne Jackson, and Rebecca Townsend visited the Museum of History and Culture to get ideas for the King William Museum. Debi hopes to get Andrew Feiler as a speaker for one of the membership meetings. Council members Gene Campbell, Reggie Neale, and Jessy Reed interviewed Dr. Lomax. Reggie also interviewed the Grace sisters from West Point. The African American video in the Museum was updated, and the new exhibit was entitled 'Black Americans Throughout King William County's History'. The audio for the Native American exhibits was repaired and is now working.

The museum hosted reunions for the Minors family, Edwards family, and the Moren-Trice family, in addition to the King William High School class of 1975. The museum ended out the year by hosting Mr. and Mrs. Clause (Bill and Shannon Gulasky) for children to come visit. April 11, 2026, will be a Founder's Day celebration at the Museum. The Love sign has been approved to go up by the fire tower.

David will be reaching out to Debi to try to coordinate with her and the museum on hosting an archaeology camp for children with the Fairfield Foundation in the future.

Bob Hubbard gave an update on the King William Historical Homes book project. A mockup of the book has been developed. The index and maps have been built out.

Rebecca Townsend volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Katie [Gibson] Harlow introduced guest speaker Barbara Vines Little. Barbara spoke on genealogical research strategies for "burned record" counties like King William. She highlighted the importance of using records from adjacent counties, mercantile records, sheriff's fee books, and legislative petitions. She also emphasized leveraging modern digital resources such as the Library of Virginia's "Lost Records Localities" collection, HathiTrust, and FamilySearch. The session concluded with a Q&A and a promotion for Barbara's new book, *The Researcher's Guide to Virginia's Historical Records*.

33 members and 6 guests attended the meeting. Light refreshments were enjoyed after the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Amanda Walker, Recording Secretary

Board & Officers, 2026-2028

Society board members and officers are elected at our July membership meeting on even numbered years. They serve two-year terms. Our current board and officers are listed on the next page. As usual, because of term limits, stepping away, and the desire to take on different roles, that list will change this summer. In other words, we have openings.

As usual, a Nominating Committee has been appointed to recommend a slate to fill these roles. If you would like to help guide the society for the next couple of years or recommend someone, please contact the committee, currently Bibb Edwards, John Breeden, and Rebecca Townsend, at kwhs@kingwilliamhistory.org.

ABOUT

As I was listening to Barbara Vines Little speak at our last Meeting, I found my head nodding up and down. I could have been back at the Mosque in the '70s - Little Feat comes to mind. "Yes!/Yep/Um-hum," I thought, over and over. These reactions had not come easily. I had learned the wisdom of her remarks my way, the hard way, mistakes. And by learning to question assumptions and received wisdom.. Before I could learn, I needed to unlearn.

While we listened to arguably the Dean of Virginia genealogists, I thought back over the decisions that had led me to be sitting there. They started with my family history. While my first serious collision with the study of the past had taken place years earlier as a newly minted Junior High social studies teacher, it was curiosity aroused by my parents' reprint of Peyton Neale Clarke's *Old King William Homes and Families* (1897) that had eventually led me to that seat in the Admin Building. Even with Clarke's book - despite its title, a thinly disguised, but extensive Edwards genealogy - there were still plenty of family mysteries to solve. At that point, I wasn't even thinking about making corrections to other people's histories, or questioning their motives.

In the late 1980s, I decided to do some research and perhaps add to what we KW Edwardses knew about ourselves. As it turned out, my sister was also interested; eventually, she became our generation's family genealogist. And, as answers to my questions proved increasingly hard to come by, I became, of sorts, a historian. Now I wasn't just reading history books for amusement, background, or clues; I found myself deep into primary sources, trespassing onto the stony fields of history, picking up rocks, hoping to find something. Doing history. Now Ms. Little, who had traveled through many of those same fields much more successfully than I, was conducting a master class. Awesome.

When it came time for the Q&A, I noted that our speaker had recently authored a new book, *A Researcher's Guide to Virginia's Historical Records* (2025), Virginia Genealogical Society. I allowed that I had already purchased two copies, one as a Christmas gift for my sister. I also mentioned that I planned to write a review for this newsletter. This is not that; you will have to wait.

In the meantime, Ms. Little's 664-page distillation of a lifetime of research is available at <https://www.vgs.org/product/a-researchers-guide-to-virginias-historical-records/>. Your move.

- Bibb Edwards

King William County Historical Society, Inc.

a volunteer-driven,
tax-exempt 501 (c) (03) corporation

Founded in 1974, the King William County Historical Society was incorporated in 1997 to promote interest in the history of King William County, Virginia. The Society operates the King William County Museum adjacent to the Old Courthouse, 227 Horse Landing Road, King William, VA.

We also support member and public education, research projects, and the preservation of historically significant local landmarks and artifacts.

Our quarterly Membership Meetings, usually held 3rd Sundays in January, April, July and October, feature informative historically themed programs that are open to all. Board meetings are usually the previous month.

We welcome your support.

Current Board & Officers

David Brown: President
Katie [Gibson] Harlow: Vice President
Sally Pearson: Past President & Treasurer
Amanda Walker: Recording Secretary
Bibb Edwards: Corresponding Secretary
John Breeden: Parliamentarian
Debi Moren: Museum Council Chair*
Lee Ramsey: At Large

*appointed by the Board