



Courthouse Tavern Museum

Tales from the Tavern

For Friends of the King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum and Members of the King and Queen County Historical Society

Spring 2016

Virginia Hunting and Fishing Traditions

On Sunday, April 24 at the Second Quarter King and Queen County Historical Society Meeting Mr. Lee Walker, Agency Outreach Division Director for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), gave an overview of the history of wildlife and hunting/fishing traditions in Virginia. The DGIF was formed 100 years ago to address the need for conservation of wildlife and fisheries, and preservation of their habitat. The abundance that was present in the 17th Century when the Europeans first came to this area was all but depleted by the start of the 20th Century. Mr. Walker reviewed lessons learned over the years and practices that have increased the availability of wildlife and fisheries for sportsmen, emphasizing the positive conservation influence of many hunt clubs and rod & gun clubs. Mr. Brownie Bevan, a member of the Historical Society Board, noted that through its 60 years the Bent Arrow Hunt Club, located in the center of the county, has respected the landowners; contributed part of their harvest to the Bruington Church food bank; and kept the roads clean in their area.

Inside this issue:

Virginia Hunting and Fishing Traditions.....Page 1
Renovated Archives Building ..Page 1
Virginia Women’s Monument Nomination.....Page 1
School Activities.....Page 2
Antique Adventurers Visit.....Page2
Then and Now – The PhonePage3
Up-The-County
Down-The-CountyPage 4

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Contributors: Mrs. Betty Hutchinson
Gwathmey, Mr. Frank Hurst, Ms. Linda Palmer Barnes

Renovated Archives Building

The Historical Society is pleased to announce that the old Clerks office, now referred to as the Archives Building, has been completely renovated. The last major repairs were done in 1962. As with any 150 year old building the original project to repair damage caused by drainage problems and to remove asbestos in the flooring grew bigger because more problems were found and opportunities for improvements were recognized. The partnership and cooperation with the County has resulted in a building that provides a comfortable and pleasing environment for research and exhibits, and a well sealed climate controlled vault for storage of archives.

Virginia Women’s Monument Nomination

In March the King and Queen County Historical Society and Courthouse Tavern Museum in partnership with the J. C. Graves Museum were pleased to nominate Miss India Hamilton for the Virginia Women’s Monument commissioned by the Virginia General Assembly to commemorate the contributions of the women of Virginia. Born to former slaves in rural King and Queen County, she became an educator and pioneer in creating literate, healthy, and prosperous rural communities at a time when many doors were closed to her gender and race. As a Jeanes supervisor for most of her long teaching career in King William County and a leader in the Negro Organization Society, she was well known on a local, state and national level. Although she never married, she was known as “the Children’s Friend”, ensuring that children had educational opportunities. A summer camp located in Gloucester County that offered organized recreational and educational enrichment experiences for Negro boys and girls throughout Virginia was named for her. In 1946 she achieved her goal of a Negro high school in King William County and in 1952 it was named Hamilton-Holmes High School. Today the middle school in King William County carries her name.



Miss India Hamilton (1879-1950)

On December 16, 2015 the King and Queen County School Board put forth a resolution thanking the King and Queen County Historical Society and the Courthouse Tavern Museum for their support of the school system.

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www.kingandqueenmuseum.com



Civil War Presentations at County Schools

Ms. Carol Lowry, a King and Queen Elementary School (KQES) teacher, in cooperation with the King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum and assisted by Ms. Alice Sheley and Ms. Biddie Shelor, made the Civil War era in King and Queen County come alive for the 4th and 5th grades at KQES on March 25 and for the 4th grade at Lawson-Marriott Elementary School on April 26. To spark student interest she combined personal family history, artifacts, and anecdotes with highlights and pictures from local, state and national history covered in the Standards of Learning. Flags, uniforms, insignias, weapons, spies, military leaders, local units, and music of both sides were covered. Ms. Lowry displayed reproduction Confederate and Federal uniform coats and hats, and two children wore them for display. They viewed a segment of The History Channel documentary "Civil War Terror" that happened in King and Queen County. Local civilian life was included with women's dresses, shoes, and accessories displayed. The interactive experience held the students' attention throughout the presentation. They left with smiles and a better understanding of the Civil War.

Antique Adventurers Visit

On May 17, a very cool, bleak day, approximately 50 members of the Antique Adventurers from Williamsburg spent the morning visiting the Museum, Courthouse Green, and Immanuel Church, cheerfully walking between the buildings in a downpour. The King and Queen County Women's Club served them a delicious homemade "country" mid-day dinner. They then visited Mattaponi Church where the tour bus got stuck. Their visit ended at the Newington archeological site and Mr. & Mrs. Frank Hurst's home in conversation with archeologist Ms. Bly Straub about the artifacts and with Mattaponi Chief Custalow about the Mattaponi River. One of the visitors characterized it this way: "The Trip, as I will call it from here to eternity, was most informative ... the beauty of the land, the graciousness of the volunteers, and the history they shared was more than anyone could have wished. The added attraction of the super gale, delicious lunch to warm us up, the churches, the log cabin (Schoolhouse), the Tavern. Every place we visited was adding to the excitement of knowing we were somewhere very special that we really hadn't known existed within easy reach of Williamsburg."

Lawson-Marriott First Grade Visits Museum

On Friday, April 22 Mrs. Randall's first grade Lawson-Marriott Elementary School students toured the Museum and participated in hands-on activities that demonstrated the differences between current activities and those of long ago. They giggled as they hand-washed clothes, put them through a hand-cranked wringer, and hung them up. In the 1880's Eastern View Schoolhouse they wrote with chalk on slate and quill pens dipped into homemade ink. They carded wool and watched as it was spun into thread to make clothes. In the Carriage House they saw a buggy that travelled the county roads for over 100 years and the horse's harness equipment. In addition, at the old Stevensville post office façade they experienced how letters were mailed in a country store. They ended their visit by ringing the old Marriott School bell.



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Then and Now – The Phone

By Mrs. Betty Hutchinson Gwathmey and Mr. Frank Hurst

The use of cell phones today is so prevalent that we feel unsettled if one is not readily available. They are a post office, watch, camera, map, weather station, flashlight, radio, navigation system, encyclopedia, game station, personal assistant, and much more. At first there was no public utility as today. Mr. Albert T. Beane related to Mr. Frank Hurst, his son-in-law, that in the 1920s his



1940s Telephone

father, Mr. William Beane, owned and operated a private company that provided the first telephone service covering the lower and middle parts of the county. This was a monumental project as there was no infrastructure in place. The cedar telephone poles were cut, cross bars assembled, and wire insulator bars installed. The drawbridges across the Mattaponi River were a particular problem; solved by encasing the wires in a lead cable underneath the drawbridge. The cable would sink to the bottom of the river, protecting the phone line. Mr. Beane was responsible for all installation and for solving maintenance issues. Customers would contact him directly for service. His sons Albert and Bunny would oftentimes answer these calls. Each customer paid a monthly fee plus a charge for each telephone call. The bill was hand delivered in the form of many little slips of paper with dates and times. Mrs. Betty Hutchinson Gwathmey talks about the customer experience. “We had a phone at ‘Westwood’ from the time we moved there in 1929. My parents had had one in their home in Walkerton. Our phone was a wooden box on the wall with a mouthpiece and receiver. There were no phone numbers. A handle on the right side of the box was turned to produce ‘long’ rings and ‘short’ rings. Our ring was one long, one short, one long and one short. Other combinations were used for each customer. All rings were heard in all homes or places of business. Needless to say it was easy to know who was getting a message and no doubt community news could travel freely. To reach someone outside our service area, i.e., in Richmond, you rang one short to get Miss Rilee the operator at West Point. Grandmother lived in Richmond and I think we reached her by calling the operator and telling her we wished to speak with Mrs. Hutchinson. I suppose she had the ‘real’ number. My father was first a county agriculture agent in K&Q and K. Wm. Counties. Later he was district agent for the eastern area, some

30 counties, and was quite skilled at contacting those he supervised. There were only 4 or 5 phones in Walkerton: Taylor and Caldwell, Shepherd’s Store, the Caldwells, and Judge Mitchell to name some. The line ran from Walkerton to Henley’s Fork. Ours was the only phone on that stretch and was really a community phone. People from Scuffletown came to call the doctor. We often got calls for neighbors in

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OPERATOR	3	
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TERM. VIA		
FIRST ROUTE		
ALT. ROUTE		
FROM	J. J. J. J.	
TO	Dan Beard	
OPERATOR	3	
CONNECT	43600	
ELAPSED TIME	12 3	
MIN.	3	
CLASS	2	
REPORT		
MESSAGE		
CHARGE	30-10	

1934 Billing Slip

emergencies. On occasion calls were made by or to neighbors from family far away. I remember Maude Taylor coming to talk with one of her sons ‘up north’. When the conversation was over Maude said, ‘Lawd, Mrs. Hutchinson, I talked with George and it sounded like he was right here and I hung up and he ain’t.’ A line went from Henley’s Fork to Bruntington where the McGeorges had a phone and also toward the courthouse. Theirs was a community service also. It was said that when my mother was in Richmond at my grandmother’s awaiting my arrival into the world, the McGeorges were to be called when there was any news so he (Papa) could get the news before everyone in Walkerton did. Mrs. McG. always kidded saying she told him he had a daughter he exclaimed, ‘the-- you say it’s a girl.’ That never bothered me for I knew I had him wrapped around my little finger from the beginning. My husband Richard and I moved to ‘The Vineyard’ in December 1949. The phone line did not come as far as our place until 1951. What a thrill to have a phone again! There had been no phone at ‘Canterbury’ so Richard didn’t miss having one. It was a dial phone on a 10 party line. When the receiver was picked up, you could hear whatever conversation was going on.

Initially there was a limit of 3 minutes before being cut off. It didn’t take long to learn that you could call right back and have another 3 minutes, but most of the time people were considerate. It was easy to tell when someone else was enjoying the conversation and it was wise not to say anything you didn’t want others to hear.”



Insulator

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UP-THE-COUNTY DOWN-THE-COUNTY

By Linda Palmer Barnes

If you live in King and Queen, you are aware of the designations Up the County (UTC) and Down the County (DTC) referring to where you live in the County. How these terms came to be is open to suggestion. It could have been the upper and lower parish churches of colonial times, or the rise in elevation from sea level (DTC) to several hundred feet above sea level (UTC), or even the attendance zones for the public schools. Whatever the reason, this UTC/DTC designation is significant and influences every resident to some degree.

Those who live UTC are more likely to:

- Work and shop in Richmond, Tappahannock, or Northern Virginia.
- Read *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *The Free-Lance Star* (Fredericksburg), and *The Rappahannock Times*.
- Watch the television news from a station in Richmond (before cable TV).

Those who live DTC are more likely to:

- Work and shop in West Point, Williamsburg, Gloucester, and the Hampton Roads area.
- Read *The Daily Press* (Newport News), and *The Tidewater Review*.
- Watch the television news from a station in Norfolk (before cable TV).

As a matter of practice during my high school years, few young people had dates or married someone from the opposite end of the county. I can only name three couples who defied the odds. To put this into perspective, if your date lives close to King's Store near the Caroline County line and dates someone from Plain View near the Gloucester County line, it is a 140 mile round trip and you never left King and Queen County! One of the missions of the Courthouse Tavern Museum is to bring together the citizens of King and Queen to share their common history, their stories of the past and present, and their hopes for the future of this unique place called King and Queen County. To this end we are beginning to brainstorm ideas and ways to bring us together. One such idea is a "bus tour" of the County with the residents from one end visiting locations in the other end. If you have ideas to help us achieve this mission, or if you have stories of the UTC/DTC from the past or present, please email me at: barnesbus@hughes.net. A collection of such stories could be archived at the Museum for the next generations' amusement.

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