

Tales from the Tavern

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

Summer 2016



Courthouse Tavern Museum

Inside this issue:

Featuring the Docents.....Page 1
Bland Family Visit.....Page 1
Then and Now - Ice.....Page 2
Third Qtr King Queen County HS Meeting.....Page 2
J. C. Graves Museum.....Page 3
Staying Connected With the Schools.....Page 4
Historical Society Awards Scholarship.....Page 4
Save These Dates.....Page 4

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Featuring the Docents

The Courthouse Tavern Museum is open a minimum of 100 days a year: each Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (except for Easter, Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day) from April to early December. **DOCENTS MAKE THIS HAPPEN!** Two are scheduled for each day. On Wednesday June 22, the King and Queen County Historical Society (HS) and Tavern Museum Council held a dinner, organized by Roberta Jones and Frank Hurst and catered by the King and Queen Women’s Club, to thank the over 35 docents for volunteering their valuable time. Nancy Herman-Thompson, Museum Council Chair, and Dr. A. W. Lewis, HS President, welcomed them. Linda Barnes as “Dorothy Docent” demonstrated what not to do in a hilarious and informative skit. The docents have many backgrounds: agriculture, education, administration, technology, finance, sales, legal, architecture, and surveying. Their interests cover history, genealogy, preservation, archeology, quilting, painting, photography, gardening and much more. A few have been a docent since the museum was established over 15 years ago. Others have just begun. Many are county residents, and those that are not travel long distances to participate. Some have deep roots in the county and others are more recent “come-heres”. Ages range from 95 to one recent high school graduate. All are interested in conveying to visitors the “gem” that is the Courthouse Tavern Museum. **THANK YOU DOCENTS!**

Bland Family Visit

On a very hot, muggy Friday, July 8th, approximately 20 members of the 32nd National Bland Family Reunion group participated in a tour arranged by Susan Richardson. The visitors were from as far away as Texas, Oklahoma, and California. They first toured the Tavern Museum and the Courthouse Green Historic District. After lunch catered by the King and Queen County Women’s Club, via bus they visited various places connected to the Bland families in the lower part of the county. At each of 4 homes, the bus was greeted by a descendent of the home. Carlisle Bland spoke on his family’s history of *Blandville* at Shanghai. Betsy Martin Guy met the bus in the Centerville area to talk about *Airville*, the only home not standing. Hunter and Stacy Richardson, met the bus at their newly acquired home, *Aspen Grove*, and Anne Trevilian Bland told about her grandparents home, *Buena Vista* at Cologne. Martha Edwards Hart who married a Bland descendant met the bus at Shackelfords Chapel. She gave a brief history of the church at Plain View and told of over 10 sections of Bland family plots in the cemetery. Refreshments were served before the tour returned home.



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Then and Now – Ice

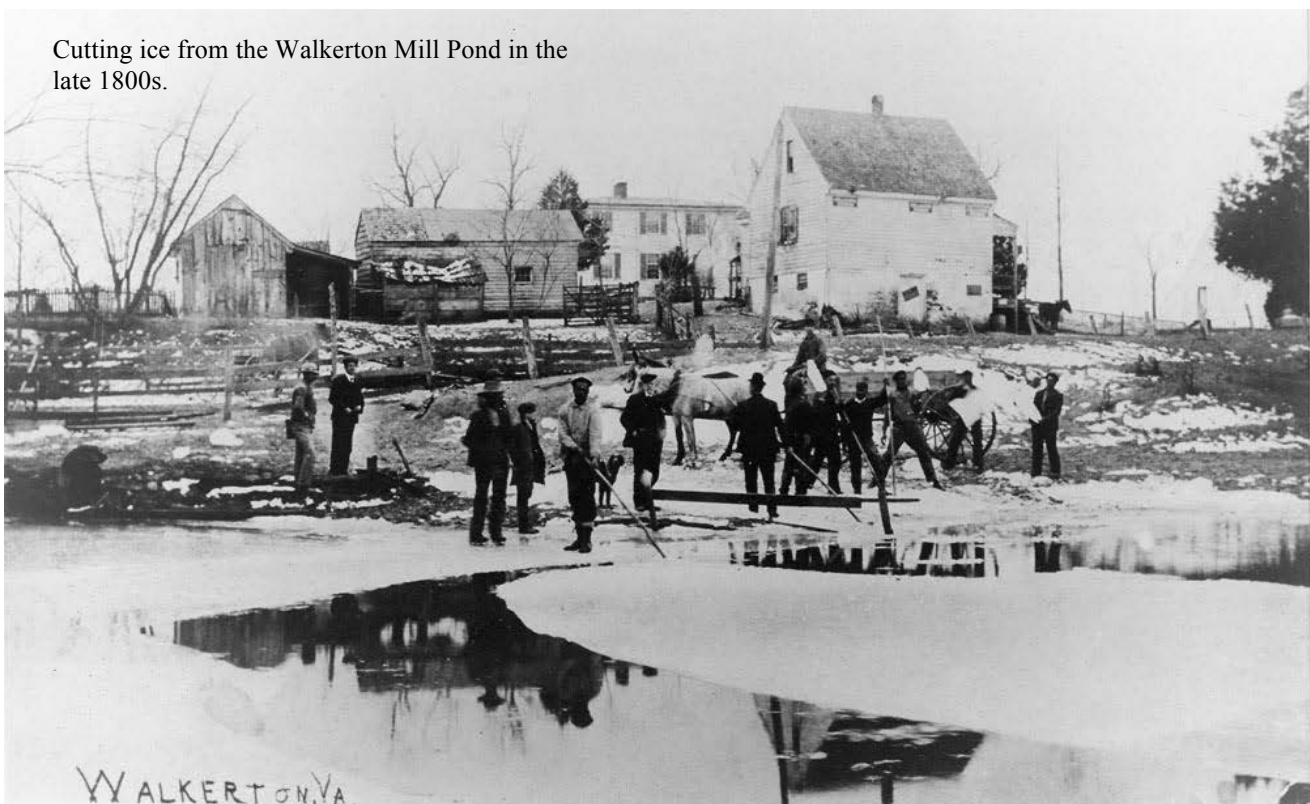
Can you imagine our hot humid summers without ice cream, iced tea, and cold lemonade, soft drinks, or beer? Automatic icemakers and ice dispensers make ice readily available. Bagged ice can be purchased at convenience stores on the way to the beach, river, or park. Air conditioning and refrigeration are so commonplace today that they are taken for granted until there is a power failure. Did people enjoy cold beverages and ice cream before refrigeration? Many local residents with ponds or access to a river had “ice pits” or “ice houses” where ice was stored. In winter large sheets of 6-12” thick ice were pushed to the edge of the pond or river, cut into manageable pieces, loaded on a cart, hauled to a pit/house, and stacked between 3-4” of sawdust or pine straw. The ice would last throughout the summer. When needed, a large block of ice was placed inside a wooden tin lined box, thus the term “ice box”, and used to churn ice cream, cool drinks, and assist in preservation of food. This practice continued until electricity was more prevalent throughout the county in the 1940s. The next time you enjoy ice cream or cold beverages, be thankful that ice is now so readily available.

Third Quarter King and Queen County Historical Society Meeting

On Sunday, July 24th Dr. Carroll William Westfall spoke at the Third Quarter HS Meeting on how buildings and architecture traditionally shaped civic order. Dr. Westfall taught at Amherst College, at the University of Illinois in Chicago, at the University of Virginia, and retired in 2015 from the University of Notre Dame. He has published three books and numerous articles on topics from antiquity onward with a focus on the history of the city. Using images, he discussed how early local architecture evolved from rudimentary structures to the more classical style in public structures, e.g. schools and government buildings, that promoted a sense of civic order and community. He noted the architectural features that unconsciously influence the behavior of individuals and emphasized that architects of public buildings today should use design elements that convey the power of a building’s purpose rather than solely focus on aesthetic features. After the meeting, the attendees were invited to the Tavern Museum for refreshments.

If you have any pictures or stories of ice houses, ice boxes, or cutting ice in the county, please share them with the Tavern Museum.

Cutting ice from the Walkerton Mill Pond in the late 1800s.



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J. C. Graves Museum

Have you explored the other museum in King and Queen County? The J. C. Graves Museum, located on the grounds of New Mount Zion Baptist Church on Rose Mount Road in the middle of the county near the village of Walkerton, presents African-American local, state, and national history, local heritage, and artifacts from county residents. Recently the Courthouse Tavern Museum Council and their guests were provided a tour of the museum by curator Ms. Nannie Taylor, and the church by Rev. Robert Brown and Ms. Ellen White. The museum was named in honor of Rev. James Corbin Graves, a devoted local educator and pastor of New Mount Zion for many years. He was born in Dragonville in King and Queen County in 1882 and died in 1958. He left the county as a young man and attended various colleges while working to earn money for his higher education. He was called to the ministry and over time graduated from Wayland College, now Virginia Union University. In 1915, at 33 years of age, he was asked to become pastor of New Mount Zion Baptist Church. Over the years he added ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church and New Morning Star Baptist Church. He also taught at Church Hill, Bethlehem, Greenbrier, and Edge Hill schools. In addition, he served on the Board of Trustees for Rappahannock Industrial Academy and organized and worked with the local Boy Scouts. The 18'x20' museum building was constructed in 1895 to house the New Mount Zion Church Hill School on a $\frac{3}{4}$ acre lot purchased by the county school district for \$14. Through the years the enrollment ranged between 25-55 students. How did all the students fit? Duties at home or seasonal jobs prevented many students from attending daily. The school expanded to a near-by storehouse when the one room schoolhouse could not accommodate the numbers and the higher grades met there. When the county schools were consolidated in 1937, the school building was bought by the church for \$51. The idea of a museum sprang from a 1995 Black History Exhibit created by church members. The large collection of artifacts was stored after the exhibit ended, but the storage area proved inadequate and some items were damaged. Church members asked if the old school building could house the exhibit materials and be expanded into a museum. The church leaders agreed, and church members and former students were contacted for funds and artifacts. The building was renovated and the J. C. Graves Museum was dedicated in 1996, about 100 years after the schoolhouse was originally built. One former student noted that the building was in better shape than the whole time it had served as a school. A pot bellied stove, a pump organ, school artifacts, and much more have been preserved. Everyday items from long ago, even before electricity, are displayed, including children's clothes, toys, and



games. African American inventors are honored. Those who served in the armed services are remembered. The museum also has a collection of important newspaper articles (with an index). Extensive genealogy research of 15 black families from King and Queen County, some information as far back as the early 1800's, is also available. The J. C. Graves Museum building is shown as a schoolhouse in the videos of King and Queen County that can be viewed at the Tavern Museum. Much more information is available in *Bulletin 86-January 1999*.

Visits are by appointment only. Please call (804) 769-2357 and take the time to explore the "treasures" of county history preserved by the J. C. Graves Museum. It is well worth it!



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Staying Connected With the Schools

As part of the HS and Tavern Museum's on-going initiative to connect with the county schools, the Tavern Museum hosts an annual luncheon for new teachers and staff and an annual dinner for the School Board. The goal is to convey how the HS and the Museum can act as a resource to assist in research, provide volunteer community service opportunities, promote development of problem solving and analytical skills, and enhance understanding of place and community. On Tuesday August 23, new teachers on their first day on the job, their mentors, School Superintendent Dr. Carol Carter, school board members, and other staff had lunch at the museum. On Thursday September 15, the annual dinner with the Superintendent of Schools and the School Board was held at the museum. On both occasions, Nancy Herman-Thompson, Chair of the Tavern Museum Council welcomed the attendees and invited them to tour the museum. Docents were available to point out areas of interest and to answer questions.

Historical Society Awards Scholarship

Ms. Angelia Hazzard, a 2016 graduate of Central High School, was awarded a \$1000 Scholarship by the King and Queen County Historical Society for the 2016 first semester at Ferrum College.

SAVE THESE DATES

Sunday October 16: King and Queen County Historical Society will hold a joint meeting with the King William County Historical Society and the West Point Historical Society at St. John's Church, 103 St. John's Church Lane, King William County.

Sunday December 4: Courthouse Tavern Museum Annual Open House. Enjoy this festive occasion with family and friends!

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