



# 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 2017

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### Society Awards Scholarships

Contributed by Biddy Walker

The King and Queen County Historical Society (HS) awarded two scholarships of \$1000 per semester for the 2017-2018 school year, one each to Corey Edwards who will be attending Bridgewater College and Khaila Nelson who will be attending the University of Mary Washington. These scholarships are supported through donations that can be made at [www.kingandqueenmuseum.org](http://www.kingandqueenmuseum.org) or via mail to King and Queen County Historical Society, P.O. Box 129, King and Queen Court House, VA 23805.

### Docent Appreciation

Docents are a key component of the Courthouse Tavern Museum operations. In June the Museum Council recognized their valuable support with a delicious dinner catered by the King and Queen County Women's Club. The Museum continues to seek volunteers and always appreciates their many contributions. Please contact us if you wish to participate.

### Save the Date: Sunday Oct. 22

#### Historical Society Meeting

by Cynthia Carter

**Milton**, the home of Mr. John Page Ball, will be the venue of the Fall meeting of The King and Queen County Historical Society, on **Sunday, October 22, 2017, at 3:00 p.m.** Dr. Bruce M. Venter, author of *Kill Jeff Davis*, will bring to life details of the Union Army's famous cavalry raid on Richmond and the events that unfolded in King and Queen County in March 1864, where Union Colonel Ulric Dahlgren was killed and his men captured while on retreat from Richmond. Milton and its original owner, the Reverend and Home Guard Captain Richard H. Bagby, have a unique connection to the story. In March 1864, the day after Dahlgren was killed, a small band of escaped Federals from Dahlgren's ranks unwittingly sought shelter at Milton, where they were subsequently captured. Captain Bagby kept his prisoners overnight in Milton's parlor after nailing the windows shut. Ironically, Captain Bagby with others from the local Home Guard, had led the successful ambush on Dahlgren and his men. Dr. Venter will share discoveries from his research, which serves to answer questions debated for many years about the failed Kilpatrick-Dahlgren cavalry raid approved by President Lincoln. While a primary purpose of the raid was to rescue Federal prisoners from Libby Prison and Belle Isle, orders found on Dahlgren's body point to a plot to capture or kill Confederate president Jefferson Davis and set Richmond ablaze. The book is a result of Dr. Venter's major interest in Civil War cavalry with an emphasis on the career of Union general Judson Kilpatrick, who organized the raid. Dr. Venter is a past president of the Richmond Civil War Round Table,

serves on the Board of the Goochland Historical Society, and has published articles in *Blue and Gray*, *Civil War*, *Patriots of the American Revolution*, *Goochland County Historical Society Magazine*, and the *Washington Times*. He is also the author of *The Battle of Hubbardton: The Rear Guard Action that Saved America*.

The original house at Milton, which was built by Captain Bagby in 1845, was vacant for many years and is no longer standing. The current house at Milton was built by owner John Page Ball in 1994. It stands in the same location and is of similar design to the original Milton owned by Captain Bagby. Please join us for this Fall event on the lawn, bring a friend and meet the author. Refreshments will follow the program and signed books will be available for sale by the author. Milton is located at 1307 Poorhouse Lane, Bruington, VA, 23023. Directional signs to the house will be posted on Route 14 (The Trail) near Stevensville and from Route 620 (Powcan Road).

### New Teacher Luncheon

Annually the Tavern Museum holds a luncheon in August for new teachers and staff from the three county schools. At this year's event Nancy Herman-Thompson, the chair of the Museum Council, welcomed them and summarized the types of support that the Museum can provide that complements curriculum objectives. Since spring 2017 the Museum has supported six school activities and is pursuing additional opportunities.

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## Promise Made, Promise Kept

by Page McLemore and Linda Barnes

The best way to begin this article is through a letter from Linda Palmer Barnes published in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*: “In his letter, ‘American cemeteries are unforgettable,’ Dennis Sugumele suggested that visiting military cemeteries around the world ‘is an experience that you will truly never forget.’ On the same day his letter was published, I had one of those experiences in a small Methodist church cemetery in very rural King and Queen County. A Vietnam veteran traveled from Detroit to keep a promise he had made to a dying buddy 50 years ago. Through the efforts of docents at the Courthouse Tavern Museum in the county, the veteran not only visited the grave of his fallen friend, but met and talked with the buddy’s brother, who was also a Vietnam veteran. The meeting was poignant as they talked of war, love of home and family, especially mothers, and of promises kept. Sugumele was right. It was an experience I will never forget.”

Here is what happened. It began with a phone call. Rene Muniz contacted King and Queen County offices looking for information regarding the Langford family and was given a contact number for the King and Queen County Historical Society. The Society and its Tavern Museum get requests for genealogy on a regular basis, but this was no ordinary request. Rene and his wife Karen planned to visit the grave of Lewis Langford, a casualty of the Vietnam War who is buried at Providence Methodist Church. He wanted to contact the family if possible. Lewis died in Vietnam in February 1968 and Rene was his friend. Though they had known each other only a few months, their friendship was important enough to Rene, after 50 years, to come from his home in Michigan to King and Queen County to stand beside the grave of the young man he calls Lew. The use of old Marriott School annuals, social media, and local connections, helped in locating Lewis’s brother, Jonah, who agreed to meet Rene. They remembered Lewis, remembered Vietnam, remembered themselves when they were young men, and demonstrated the difficulties in coming to terms with those memories. From the Tavern, the group proceeded to the Providence Church cemetery on Poor House Lane. Lewis’s gravestone displays not only his name and dates, but also his rank and unit with a Black Cats symbol, and that he died in Vietnam. Lewis lies next to his mother, Bessie, who lived another 30 years after Lewis’s death. Beyond Bessie lies Lewis’s father, Russell Langford, Sr. These graves are lovingly decorated with flowers placed by the family and Lewis’s grave is also graced by a small American flag. Rene remembers Lew this way, saying the words he wanted Bessie to hear: *Almost Fifty years have passed since I last spoke to Lewis, the features of his face*

*have long since faded from my memory but the friendship that we shared has never left my thoughts. Lewis was assigned to Maintenance with the 282<sup>nd</sup> Assault Helicopter Company, Marble Mountain, Danang, South Vietnam, in November of 1967 and I had been assigned to Operations with 282<sup>nd</sup> in March of that year. Lewis did his job very well, everyone knew that they could trust their lives with anything that Lewis worked on. Although Lewis and I only knew each other for a few months, we had become friends and we would talk about the life that we had left behind and all the fun things that we would do when we got home. We would both brag about our High School episodes and couldn’t wait to rekindle some of our past friendships. We would talk about many things and one was that the North Vietnamese Soldier also had a purpose and that he was committed to his own ideas and feelings. We would speak about some of our most inner thoughts to each other, and the topic of our “Mothers” would always come to the forefront. We both would brag, as everyone does, about the great taste of our Mom’s cooking, and how we missed our Mothers. Lewis and I “Promised” each other that if something happened to either of us, the survivor would someday go to the other’s Mother and tell her how much she meant to us and how much we loved her. This thought has been in my Heart and on my Mind since February of 1968. It has taken me almost 50 years to fulfill my promise, this I will someday have to explain to Lewis. Rene turned to the graves and said: “Mrs. Langford, Lewis loved and missed you very much. Lewis, May God bless and watch over you forever.”*



Jonah Langford and Rene Muniz

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## Promise Made, Promise Kept cont'd

In accordance with the traditions of the company, Rene left a medallion called a challenge coin, on Lewis's gravestone. He explained the tradition this way: *a symbol that Military units use as a "Challenge" by the one who presents the coin, to all those who are present and do not have the coin, to buy a round of beer. Besides being a message to others, these coins will be used by Lewis to buy me a beer when we meet again.* Signed Rene Muniz. After handshakes and hugs and promises to keep in touch, the group went its separate ways thinking of Lewis and Rene, of promises made and promises kept. It was a remarkable and unforgettable day. Dawn Shank, Linda Barnes and Page McLemore were the docents on duty that day and were honored to have witnessed this occasion. Even though our guests came on a mission unlike that of our usual Tavern Museum visitors, there was still a feeling of real service to the living by making a connection to the lives of people who, while no longer with us, are a tangible part of the history of our county. Perhaps many of our guests, if we are successful, feel that connection through the presence of so many objects and stories of past generations.



Black Cat Challenge Coin left by Rene Muniz on Lewis Langford's grave.

## Tavern Museum To Open Two New Exhibits

In October, the Tavern Museum will open two new exhibits, Fossils in King and Queen County and the Archaeological Investigation of the Remains of Two Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Vessels. The fossils being displayed were found in King and Queen County by Mr. Newell Randall, a long time resident of the county who has had a love of fossil hunting since the age of 10. Mr. Randall is interested in introducing a view of the world "beneath our feet" and is excited about sharing his collection with others, especially students. His artifacts cover a variety of marine animals, predominantly sharks over a number of geological eras. Noted geologists and curators of natural history exhibits have provided input into the meticulous identification of his finds. The exhibit of the Remains of Two Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century Vessels tells the story of the 2009 discovery and subsequent documentation of colonial era wooden vessels off the Mattaponi River shoreline at Newington Plantation, listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. These wrecks have been identified as the oldest vessels archaeologically investigated to date in the Commonwealth of Virginia. This exhibit is provided by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hurst, owners of Newington Plantation, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.



Dr. Lewis and Dr. Cook present proposed district.

## Historic District Proposed

The name Bruington (or Brewington) appeared early in King and Queen County history and survives in the name of a church, a dwelling, a village, and a road in the central area of the county. When Bruington Baptist Church began in 1790, a community grew up around it. By 1827 the houses titled Brewington, The Vineyard, and Norwood had been built and were soon followed by Marlboro, Cloverly, Locust Hill, Greenview, Erin, The Grange, and The Institute. Country stores, such as the McGeorge store, appeared. By the fourth quarter of the 19th century Bethlehem Baptist Church, an offshoot of Bruington Baptist Church, was part of the religious and social structure of the community. Although more modern structures can be seen, as a whole, the area is unspoiled and has remained relatively unchanged. Dr. A. W. Lewis, outgoing president of the King and Queen County Historical Society, has for several years led the project to have the area encompassing the properties above designated as a Rural Historic District. This required coordination with the county and Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). A cost-sharing grant from DHR and private support provided funding. Dr. Libby Cook and Dr. David Brown, historical archaeologists and preservationists with the Fairfield Foundation, were engaged to prepare the preliminary information file (PIF) for submission to DHR. At the July 23<sup>rd</sup> Historical Society meeting Cook and Brown described the project. They used a map to convey the location and size of the district, providing highlights of the 50 architectural features in the proposed district and the importance of the

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## Then and Now

Today, there are many, many choices available for coffee whether you brew it at home or buy it on the go. Advertising tries to “hook” the consumer. Not much seems to have changed over the years. Recently, an advertisement for Lion Coffee fell out of an old book printed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a very colorful drawing of the package that opened up with an enticing message. Lion Coffee has been on the market for over 150 years. The Woolson Spice Company of Toledo, Ohio made Lion Coffee a household name with popular ad

campaigns that would rival today’s advertising – catchy slogans, trading cards, and rebates. Today it is a drip coffee product produced in Hawaii with a “smooth finish and sweet taste.” It can be purchased via the internet and has a world-wide following.



Lion Coffee Package

## Proposed Historic District cont'd

history of the Bruington community. Members of the Courthouse Tavern Museum Council served as advisors and local facilitators. The property owners, some whose families had been in the county for one hundred and fifty years or more, were very willing to share stories and information. The PIF was approved by DHR, which has recommended proceeding with the formal application to the National Register of Historic Places. Noting that an historic designation is nothing more than an honorific, Brown said, if granted, there may be significant advantages for owners of older houses for tax credits and offsets for expenses related to maintenance. If approved, the Bruington Rural Historic District would be the third historic district in King and Queen County, joining the Newtown Historic District and the King and Queen Courthouse Green Historic District. Note: All the major properties within the proposed district are described in the book *Old Houses of King and Queen County Virginia* sold by the Museum.

King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum  
PO Box 129  
King and Queen C.H., VA 23085-0129

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