

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 2021



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Museum Activities

Although the Museum is still closed, the Council and volunteers have been very active. Several rooms have received a fresh coat of paint. The two bedrooms on the third floor have been cleaned and the artifacts have been refreshed. New exhibits are under development, The Bruington Rural Historic District and Early King & Queen County Public Schools.

New Museum Hours

Until further notice, the Museum is open by appointment only. Please contact us in advance.

Docents Needed

Due to the pandemic, the Museum has been closed, but expects to reopen in the future. Docents are critical to its ongoing operation. Normal operating times are Friday and Saturday 12:30-4:30 p.m. and on Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m. from late March to early December. During that time the Museum is closed on Easter, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. New docents are provided training and initially teamed with experienced docents. Please consider volunteering 4 to 8 days a year for this important role or recommending this to a friend or family member. Contact the Museum via the website www.kingandqueenmuseum.org/contact-us/ or by phone (804)-785-9558.

Virtual King & Queen County Historical Society Meeting

Influenced by restrictions due to the pandemic and interest in the topic by out-of-area participants, the April 25, 2021 King & Queen County Historical Society meeting was held virtually, a new experience that was well received by the over 35 attendees.

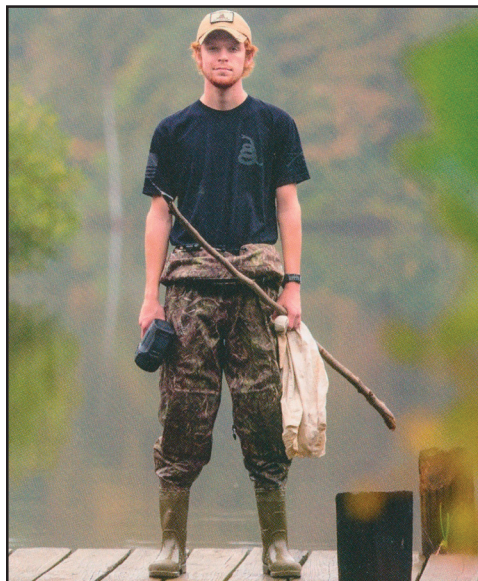
The presentation was by Margaret W. Crosson, president of the Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail. The Lewis Cemetery has been added to the Trail. See inside article, "John Lewis and The Lewis Cemetery Honored." If you would like other meetings held virtually, please contact us.



Margaret W. Crosson, President Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail

Docents and Volunteers

William Brook Gwathmey, our oldest docent, turned 100 years of age in May and Zachery Michael Sheley, one of our youth volunteers, graduated this year from Maggie L. Walker High School and is beginning a new chapter in his life. William was born and raised in the county and is a WWII veteran. He has been a long time educator in King & Queen County and over the years has participated in many community events here. He has been involved with the Courthouse Tavern Museum throughout its 20 years, contributing like his mother, Bessie McGeorge Gwathmey, a founder of the King & Queen County Historical Society, and his sister Caroline Gwathmey Jones, a founder of the Courthouse Tavern Museum. William is an active docent who loves to talk with visitors about the history of the county. While in elementary school, Zack began volunteering at the Museum as a children's activity lead during the Annual Holiday Open House and has assisted in multiple other ways since then. As a gifted high school student from King and Queen County, he entered Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies (MLWGS) that offers a comprehensive college preparatory program. Since the school is in Richmond it meant a 40 mile drive each way every day. Zack loves sports and outside activities. We wish William and Zack the best and thank them very much for their support over the years.



Zachery Sheley

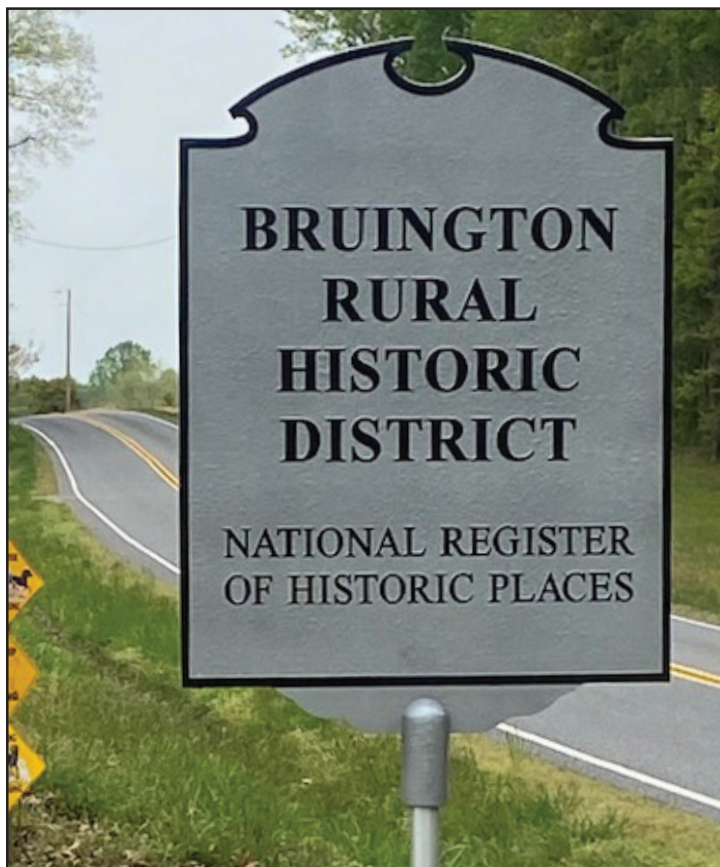


William Gwathmey

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Bruington Rural Historic District

The sign below has been placed in the heart of the district near Bruington Church.



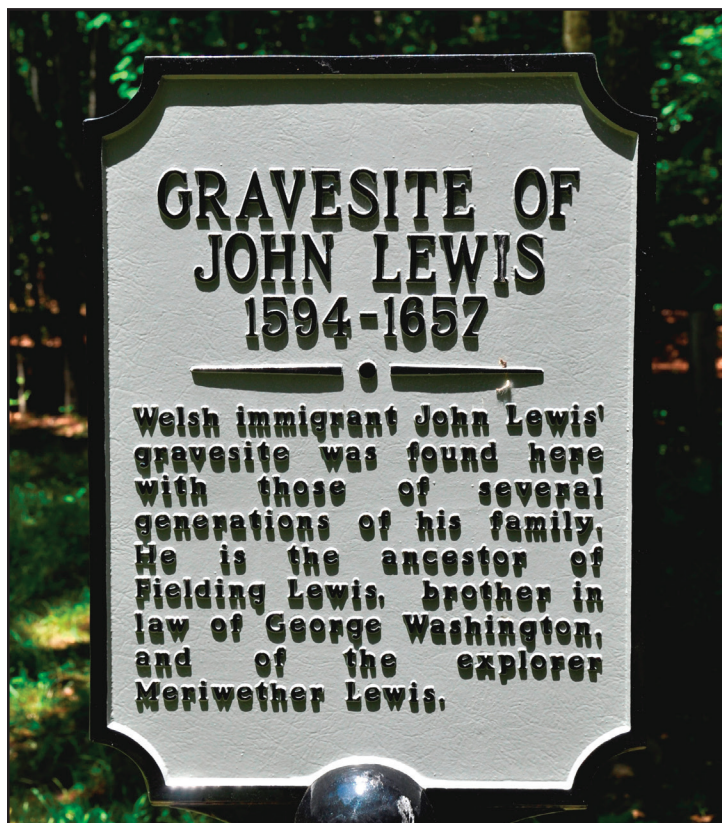
enough that it prompted him in his late 50s to bring his family to the New World; his wife Lydia and three sons, William, Edward, and John, Jr. In 1653 he took out a patent on the property on Poropotank Creek in what was then New Kent County, now King and Queen County. He lived only 4 years after arriving there. Lewis descendents include Meriwether Lewis of Lewis & Clark expedition fame and Fielding Lewis, brother-in-law of George Washington.

On June 5, 2021, OFPA held a formal grave marking ceremony at the Lewis Cemetery, located at 565 Poropotank Dr., Shackelfords, VA 23156 in the lower end of the county, honoring John Lewis, including a colonial color guard. OFPA President Michael E. Weyler was master of ceremonies supported by Jerry Hubbard, Mike Lyman, Doug Graves, Daniel Warren, Jim Russell, Rich Rattan and Dr. Kenneth Hawkins. King & Queen County Historical Society President Cynthia Carter provided greetings from the Society. John Lewis' descendent Dr. A. W. Lewis spoke about the preservation of the cemetery and the importance of John Lewis to the county and his family. The marker was unveiled by two direct descendants of John Lewis, Dr. Augustine Lewis and OFPA Associate Jim Russell. It reads "Virginia Founder Before May 13, 1657, Virginia Society Order of Founders & Patriots of America." Two wreaths, one from the General Order of the OFPA and one from the VA Society of the OFPA, were presented. Cynthia Carter placed a floral spray from the King and Queen County Historical Society. After the playing of taps, the benediction was given by Associate Ken Hawkins. Visit www.vaofpa.org/pdfs/FounderJohnLewis.pdf for more details.

John Lewis and The Lewis Cemetery Honored

An article in the *Tales From the Tavern Winter 2017* issue reported on the preservation of the Lewis Cemetery, the oldest cemetery in King & Queen County. This year John Lewis, colonial immigrant and ancestor of many Lewis descendants in America, and the Lewis Cemetery, his burial place and that of his family members, have been recognized in two ways. John Lewis has been honored by the Virginia Order of the Founders and Patriots of America and the Lewis Cemetery has been included on the Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail.

The Virginia Order of the Founders and Patriots of America (OFPA) commemorates male persons who resided in Virginia within 50 years of the 1607 founding of Jamestown by laying a stone marker at the burial site. The OFPA documents colonial ancestry for genealogical research. Finding a 17th century burial site with a gravestone is not easily achieved. The discovery of the heavily overgrown Lewis Cemetery in the 1940s by Dr. Malcolm Harris was remarkable and uncovered the grave of the immigrant John Lewis. The inscription on his gravestone reads, "Here lieth interred the Body of John Lewis (borne in Monmouthshire) died the 21st of August 1657 aged 63years. The Anagram of his Name- I Shew No Ill". Records from Wales indicate that John Lewis was a merchant of some means living near present day Abergavenny in the parish of Llantilio Pertholey. Like most Welsh gentry of the time he was a supporter of King Charles in the British Civil War and when the royalists were defeated he found his situation uncomfortable



Lewis Gravesite Interpretive Signage
Image courtesy of OFPA

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John Lewis descendants Dr. A. W. Lewis and Jim Russell Unveil Marker
Image courtesy of OFPA



OFPA President Michael Weyler and HS President Cynthia Carter Make Presentations

The Lewis & Clark Expedition (1803-1806) was so very important to the formation of the United States that much has been documented about it, starting with the original expedition records. President Thomas Jefferson commissioned the expedition to map and explore the Louisiana Purchase that doubled the land area of the United States and expanded it from “sea to shining sea”. Less well known is that both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were natives of Virginia and connected to King and Queen. A group of volunteers has worked to promote this historical connection by creating The Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail. This is a driving “stop-to-experience” tour that honors the travels of Lewis & Clark in the Commonwealth and their Virginia family connections.

Margaret W. Crosson, president of the Virginia Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail, spoke at the April 25, 2021 virtual King & Queen County Historical Society meeting. She discussed the ongoing efforts to include the routes in Virginia that Lewis and Clark traveled before and after their famous expedition and family related places. A 2020 Commonwealth of Virginia General Assembly resolution supported the expansion of this trail. She discussed the King & Queen connection and Dr. A. W. Lewis, a member of the Historical Society Board and the Virginia



John Lewis Gravestone and OFPA Marker

Lewis & Clark Legacy Trail Board, provided background on the Lewis Cemetery connection which is now a stop on the trail. As mentioned above it is the burial site of John Lewis, an ancestor of Meriwether Lewis. Legacy Trail signage stating this will be placed at the entrance to the cemetery. Visit the Virginia Lewis and Clark Legacy Trail website at www.valewisandclarklegacytrail.org for more information and learn how to support this volunteer effort.

Remembrances - Biscuit Addict Confesses

Most Virginians of a certain age have memories of visiting relatives in the country. The article below, possibly published in the 1970s, is by Guy Friddell a long time newspaper columnist with the *Virginia Pilot* in Norfolk whose work also appeared in the Richmond papers. It was filed in the Museum archives as it provides a glimpse of life in King and Queen County many years ago.

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Charles H. Ryland writes from Warsaw -- Virginia, that is -- to confess that he has always been an addict of hot biscuits, a disposition he inherited from his father "who was known to send them back to the kitchen if they weren't HOT." Ryland's mother, who was from central Kentucky where Ryland was born, talked about beaten biscuits, "and on a trip to Kentucky," he continues, "I was subjected to those hard, tough, crumbly, unmanageable favorites of the Blue Grass...." That aside into Kentucky probably will fetch reaction from beaten biscuits advocates in Virginia, but no matter. I'm inclined to agree with Ryland. A beaten biscuit is a step up from chalk without flavor, but those who enjoy them have my heartiest good wishes and respect. Smithfield ham helps a beaten biscuit, the richness of the ham offset agreeably by the dry, highly refined, aristocratic beaten biscuit. I wouldn't mind one now.

"As a boy," Ryland remembers, "I spent summers at the family home place (Ingleside) at King and Queen, which was presided over by my great uncle (John Ryland), a bachelor, and his maiden sister (Antoinette Ryland). It was a big old house built in 1812 with a high basement. The dining room and 'lock room' were in the basement. The kitchen was detached but connected with an open 'dog trot'...."

(Let's pause and define a few terms. A "high basement" is what some people call an English basement, partly or entirely above ground. Ryland, however, observed that when he was in England for an extensive visit, he didn't see any English basements, and, anyway, high basement is more descriptive.

A 'lock room' is a locked place for foodstuffs, canned and otherwise, on the order of an extra large pantry. A 'dog trot' is a covered passageway, open at both ends, between the kitchen and house. Now you have the picture.) "There are all kinds of breads -- batter bread, crackling bread, loaf bread, corn bread, but most especially biscuit," Ryland recalls. "Every meal required two pans of biscuit, one to start the meal and a fresh hot pan halfway through. This meant there were biscuits left over at every meal which were put in a 'safe'."

A 'safe,' or 'pie safe' as it is sometimes called, was a boxlike wooden frame with tin sides perforated with holes in a pattern. In short, a breadbox in days when there was no electric refrigeration. "The biscuits," Ryland remembers, "were large, flat, rather crisp. I can remember my hunger for them if I had been playing outdoors or doing some work with my uncle on a hot summer day. I would go in the lock room, get out a bowl of cold cabbage, a pat of butter and the biscuit jar; cut the biscuit open, put on a generous supply of butter, pile it high with cold cabbage, and it was a meal for a king. This is what youth does for you. It would probably kill me now. I am glad to see that biscuit is coming back in style."

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