



Tales from the Tavern

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

2023 Volume 2

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Aylett Country Day School Students Visit

A very rainy day did not deter the 52 eager first through third graders from Aylett Country Day School and their chaperones from enjoying a visit to the Museum on April 28. They learned (1) how the marine fossils displayed were deposited in the county, and they dug for sharks teeth; (2) how wool fiber spun from shorn sheep was used to make clothing before clothes stores existed, (3) by washing, wringing dry, and hanging clothes how clothes were cared for before there were automatic washing machines and dryers; (4) that early post offices were in stores, and the students hand stamped envelopes like the early postmasters; (5) how students were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic in a real 1880s one room schoolhouse; and (6) how 100 years ago people traveled in the horse drawn carriage parked in the carriage house. Rain kept the picnic lunch inside, and Dawn Shank read to them from her new book, "River Stone", a time-travel fictional account of a young girl who visits her grandparents on Garnett's Mill Creek in King & Queen. This was the first school visit since COVID ended. The Museum looks forward to more student visits in the future.



2023 Save The Dates

Dedication of a Virginia Highway
Marker to James Horace Carter,
sponsored by MPAAGS -
Saturday, October 14, 2023 at
11:00 a.m. - Carter was murdered
near the Courthouse in 1923.
Reception to follow at the Tavern
Museum.

Historical Society Meeting -
Sunday, October 22, 2023 at
3:00 p.m.

Tavern Museum Holiday Open
House - Sunday, December 3,
2023 at 2:00 p.m.



Museum Hosts New King & Queen County Teachers

On Monday, August 14 Museum
Council Chair Linda Barnes welcomed
26 educators, school board members,
and staff to the annual luncheon
for new King & Queen County
teachers held at the Museum. She
summarized how the Museum could
augment their curriculum and invited
them to view the Early Public Schools
exhibit and the genuine one room log
schoolhouse.



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Society Awards Scholarships

by Bidy Walker

The King & Queen County Historical Society annually offers a \$2000 scholarship from the Mary Evelyn Turpin Acree Fund to each of two new graduates of King & Queen Central High School for the first year in a college, university, or technical school. The King & Queen County Historical Society is pleased to award the 2023 scholarships to Ms. Kortney Light and Ms. Olivia Lockhart. Both will be attending Rappahannock Community College. These scholarships were given in memory of two former King and Queen County educators: Mr. Jack Eades and Mr. William B. Gwathmey. We wish these graduates well as they enter another chapter in their lives and send them on their way with a Dr. Seuss-ism:

*“You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
.... You can steer yourself
any direction you choose.
You’re on your own. And you know what you know.
And YOU are the girl who’ll decide where to go.”*

Dr. Seuss, Oh, the Places You’ll Go!



Ms. Kortney Light



Ms. Olivia Lockhart

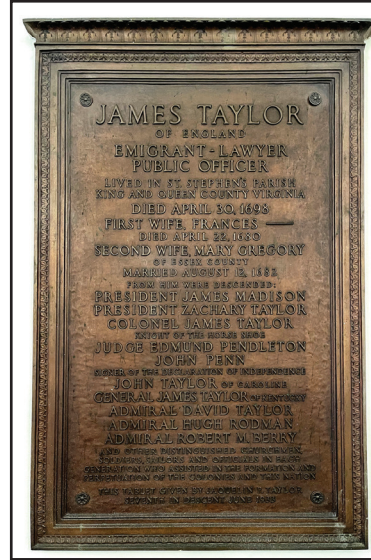
James Taylor I Descendants Visit

The Museum welcomes groups and, with planning, can accommodate them at special times. When the James Taylor I Descendants Association (whose members are from the U.S. and other parts of the world) meets in Virginia they usually schedule a visit to the Museum. James Taylor I and his immediate descendants resided in



Restored 1715 Sundial

King & Queen County in the late 1600s and early 1700s. Of particular interest to the group was the exhibit of the 1715 Sundial from the Upper Church of St. Stephen’s Parish, locally called Apple Tree Church. It was originally given to the Anglican Church by Colonel James Taylor, and restored in 2011 through a

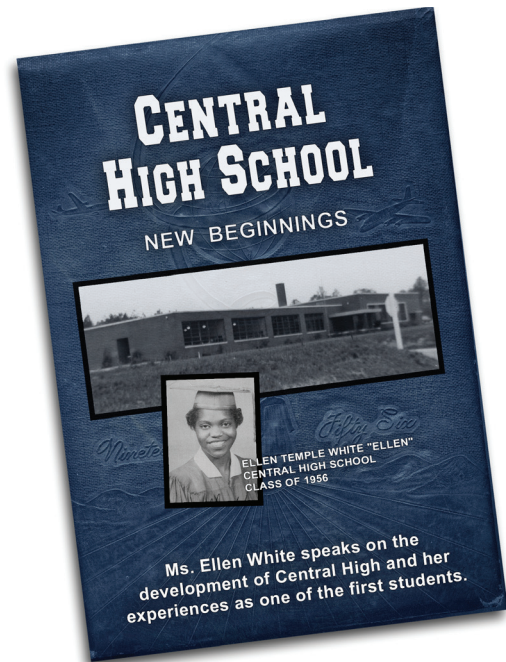


Taylor Plaque in Circuit Court Building

joint effort of the Tavern Museum, Immanuel Episcopal Church, and Steve Taylor. They also viewed the plaque memorializing several prominent members of the Taylor family, including Presidents James Madison and Zachary Taylor, that hangs on the wall of the Circuit Court.

Memories of Central High School

We all remember our school days and enjoy telling stories of our school years. At the July 23rd King & Queen County Historical Society meeting, Ms. Ellen White recounted her experiences at Central High School which opened in



Ms. Ellen White speaks on the development of Central High and her experiences as one of the first students.

fall of 1951 as a Negro high school. There were many new beginnings that year for the King & Queen schools and students. Central High School was the first centrally located high school in the county, serving grades 8-12 with students from all over the 326 square miles of the county. It was the first totally consolidated high school in the county, absorbing students from two other high schools (King & Queen Training School at Newtown and Plainview-Prospect at Hockley) and two elementary schools (Edgehill near Walkerton and Greenbrier near St. Stephens Church).

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The School Board and Board of Supervisors meeting minutes provided a great deal of “eye-opening” information. These records revealed very negative positions held at the time, which Ellen had not fully appreciated until her research. In 1938 Central High School was proposed by the Negro community to the County School Board which debated whether it was needed. At the time the consensus was that Negro students did not require an academic education, they should only be taught enough for a vocation. Nor did they need new facilities and equipment. After many years of public hearings and debate, the Board of Supervisors finally agreed to a new school, but initially not a gymnasium. The school was projected to cost \$320,000, part funded by the state and \$100,000 in County bonds backed by Citizens & Farmers Bank of West Point. The architect was J. Henley Walker, Jr. and construction was awarded to Thorington Construction Company. Ellen commented that it took 13 years from start to finish. She was born the year it was proposed and entered the 8th grade the first year it operated. She noted that the students were not aware of the negative sentiments about building the school, but were simply excited to attend a brand new high school. Mr. Charles Williams, a beloved educator, was instrumental in achieving this outcome. Ellen recognized principal Gordon Robinson and named the teachers who contributed so much to the foundation of the new school.

High school is a “new beginning” for most students. However, more so for Ellen who came from Greenbrier, a one room elementary school, where a single teacher taught grades 1-7. There were 61 8th grade students that first year at Central, including 5 sets of siblings, only one a set of twins. Ellen related that although her sister Mary was older, they both entered Central in the same class. Ellen began elementary school in the 3rd grade because she was taught first and second grades at home by sister Mary as Mary progressed through those grades. Ellen’s mother instructed Mary how to teach Ellen to read. She remembered a fun geography assignment: each student could choose a state on which to report. In contrasting “then with now,” Ellen said that she spent hours researching the encyclopedia when today a smart phone can present the information in minutes. There was a large glee club made up of students from all grades. The girl’s uniform was a white blouse and a navy blue skirt. Ellen remembers sewing the taffeta skirts for the club, and “never wanted to sew another taffeta skirt ever again.” (the material is difficult to sew). Initially, there was a boys basketball team, but no football team, and later a girls basketball team. Ellen stressed the importance of the the 4-H club as part of the school and provided highlights of its significant influence.

Ellen conveyed that, fortunately, the students were not aware of the many “negatives” surrounding the creation of Central High School. She shared some examples and stated that this program should have been about the first Central High students. There were 28 seniors in her class, the first class that had gone all the way through

high school at Central. With their exceptional teachers and the positive encouragement of their parents, many students had very successful careers. Unfortunately, no-one thought to interview them 25 years ago while many were still with us. Ellen provided some examples. She wrote the class prophecy in the 1956 *Tattler*, the Central High yearbook, and “nailed it” for at least one classmate - Winston Harvey: “If you’re in for a cool crew cut, stop at Winston Harvey’s barbershop....” For years he owned his own barber shop on Church Hill in Richmond and recently retired. Sister Mary was at MCV as a dental assistant and, after retiring, studied for a Masters of Divinity, becoming a minister. Ellen retired as a Vice President of Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City. She said, “Nothing bothered our minds. We were smart.”

Ellen closed with, “The school taught us how to live, learn, and love. How to progress through life regardless of the beginning. I am happy to have been a part of it and I say it doesn’t make any difference where you came from, it didn’t make any difference about the furniture or books, if you continue to grow your life, you can do anything you want.”

Ms. Ellen White is a native of King & Queen County, Past President and member of the King & Queen County Historical Society Board, and one of the founders of the Courthouse Tavern Museum.

A copy of the 1956 *Tattler* can be viewed at the Courthouse Tavern Museum.

From the 1956 *Tattler*, Senior Class History written by Joyce Garlick:

“As we face the dawn of a new day, we know we will profit by the many experiences that we have had here at Central High School; whether it be the furthering of our education or whether we assume now our places among the millions of employed individuals of this land.”



Ms. Ellen White and Mr. Jamie Ryland, Vice President of the King & Queen County Historical Society

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Identifying Pleasant Hill High Students

Some years ago the Historical Society was given a framed picture of the entire student body of Pleasant Hill High School taken in May 1949 - students in grades 1-11. (At that time public schools only required 11 grades) Seeing the exhibited picture, visitors commented that someone needed to identify all the students before there was no one left who could do so. Museum volunteer Roberta Jones, a 1953 graduate of Pleasant Hill, has taken on this project and the image was enlarged to assist her. If you are interested in participating, please contact her or the Museum. Also, a copy of the picture can be bought through the Museum for \$40.



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