



CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

January 2021

P.O. Box 324, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427

Vol. 41, Issue 1

MEETING CANCELLED

The Caroline Historical Society, Inc., will **NOT** meet at 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 24, 2021, in the Caroline Community Services Center, 17202 Richmond Turnpike, Milford, VA 22514

From the President

I sincerely hope members and their families are safe and enjoyed a fantastic holiday season. I know 2020 has been a rough year. We can only hope and pray 2021 will be better.

I regret to say, due to COVID-19 restrictions, CHS will not have the annual membership meeting on January 24, 2021. I wish I could provide news of a more positive outlook for future meetings in 2021. Like so many individuals, businesses, churches, local governments, civic organizations and historical societies like ourselves, this past year has been difficult in many ways. Due to local, state, and federal government restrictions, CHS has not been allowed to open the museum to the public, schedule events, or hold meetings. By being shut down, it does give our committee members the opportunity to change existing exhibits and prepare for the time when CHS can open backup. The Collection Committee has been staying busy on Fridays catching up with the cataloging of recently donated items. It is unknown as to when our museum and the Sidney E. King Arts Center will be open to the public in 2021.

CHS Annual Award

Each year the Annual Award Committee reviews names submitted for consideration for the CHS Annual Award. The award is given to an individual, group, business, organization, or other entity that has made great strides in efforts to promote and preserve local history. CHS will announce the winner of the Annual Award for 2020 in the April 2021 newsletter.

Old Jail Update: In September 2020, CHS mailed a letter to the Caroline Board of Supervisors offering to purchase and install a plaque on the Old Jail (circa 1900), located on the courthouse lawn. The plaque, similar to the one pictured here, would state the structure has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. CHS is currently working with county staff to select a plaque design and location for the placement. Through the efforts of CHS, the Old Jail was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in December 2019. CHS has established a special "Old Jail" preservation fund for future renovations to the building. Our next step will be to apply for various local, state, and federal grants, along with private donations, to carry out our goal to restore this historic structure. Please forward your tax-deductible donations for this important preservation project to:

Caroline Historical Society Inc.
P.O. Box 324
Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324.



Loss of CHS Members

Our deepest sympathy goes out to the families of CHS members who recently passed away.

- **Hardy Dunnington**, was a lifelong resident of Caroline County. A local “son” who was always active in community events and a well-respected businessman who gave back to the community and his church. A good friend to all, he is missed by many.
- **Armando Flores**, a Vietnam veteran, who not only served his country, but his community as well. He was active in many civic organizations and local government committees. Thank you for your service, you will be missed.
- **Mary Smith Blanton**, a Charter Member of the Caroline Historical Society, Inc. and well-known businesswoman.
- **Betty Day**, a gracious and charming lady who lived with her husband, Jim Day, at “Broadhurst” in Bowling Green, Virginia
- **Major Jim Madison (USAFR Retired)**, a faithful member and Air Force veteran of the Korean War.

New Books/Papers on Local History

Finding a Way Home – author Larry Dane Brimner, CHS Life Member, has just completed this well-researched and written nonfiction about the love story of Richard and Mildred Loving of Caroline County. Larry visited with CHS about two years ago when researching information for his new book. He used CHS resources as well those available in Fredericksburg and Richmond such as the Library of Virginia. The book, 112 pages, sells for about \$18.00 and is available in most bookstores and through Internet sales. CHS will add this book to our reference library.

The Last Hope, Lies, Truths and Legends of John Wilkes Booth’s 34-Hour Escape Through King George County, Virginia – by local (King George County, Va.) author Elizabeth Nuckols Lee. This 295-page nonfiction paperback describes the travels Abraham Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth and Booth’s conspirator, David Herold, as they travel through King George County while trying to escape. Detailed history on the people, places, back roads, and problems encountered on their escape route. Available for sale at Historic Port Royal’s Museum for the reasonable price of \$25.00

Published Paper on Losing Local Newspapers

Some of you may remember a gentleman who came to Caroline County about two years ago conducting interviews with residents about the negative impacts to a community of losing a local newspaper. The gentleman, Nick Mathews, PhD student, conducted 19 interviews attempting to perform a qualitative investigation as to the perceived negative impacts to the residents, businesses, schools, local governments, and the community in general. The core of Nick’s work was directly related to the closing of our local weekly newspaper, *The Caroline Progress*. Mr. Mathews has published his results and a full text copy will be presented to CHS by the author in the near future. His paper is entitled, *Life in a News Desert: The Perceived Impact of a Newspaper Closure on Community Members*. I am unable to reproduce the document due to its length and limited space in the CHS newsletter. Here is a link to a newspaper article in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* about Mr. Mathews’ paper by longtime columnist Bill Lohmann. Hold “Ctrl” on your keyboard then right click on the following: <http://richmond.com/news/local/lohmann-life-in-caroline-county-the-loss-of-a-newspaper-hits/article/6f0bb574-d723-5159-a892-2464e2989047.html>

R. Wayne Brooks, President, Caroline Historical Society, Inc., wbrooks@bealenet.com

Preservation of Grace Episcopal Church in Caroline County

Established in 1785, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization that in addition to having 180 congregations, owns many inactive church buildings such as Grace Church in Caroline County. The diocese provides property insurance for its structures but is unable financially to maintain their physical condition and repair.



Built in 1833, Grace Church is the oldest Episcopal church in Caroline County and one of the few period churches in Virginia that have survived relatively unaltered. Religious services were continuous until 1941 when Fort A.P. Hill displaced many of the congregants. Since then, the church has been used primarily for the purposes of tourism and preservation study.

In 2019, the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation accepted Grace Church as a historic landmark due to its architectural and military significance. The church's core is a typical brick, colonial design; in 1854 it was elongated with additions to the front and rear and embellished with early Greek Revival architectural elements. Notable for quality craftsmanship and artistry, the church serves as a textbook example of cyma-cum-bevel molding and ornamental muntin design. With original shutters, windows, pews, plaster walls, floor, and woodwork, and without the addition of plumbing, heating, or electricity, Grace Church serves as a quite reliable historical guide.

Grace Church also is significant for its association with Gen. Stonewall Jackson's winter headquarters between the battles at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville in 1862–1863. While many churches closed in Virginia and clergymen fled for safety during the Civil War, religious services continued at Grace Church for congregants and soldiers. Its location on a primary transportation corridor between Richmond and Fredericksburg made it a convenient hospital site for wounded soldiers as well. Today the structure reflects this important historical association in a tangible way as it sets unchanged, including the pews and altar referenced in soldiers' journals and their original graffiti penciled on plaster walls.

Also of note are the gallery built for enslaved persons in 1854 and the ecclesiastical decorations, including an 1875 painting behind the altar titled *The Ascension of Christ* and an altar table, missal stand, and cross carved from a tree at nearby *Chestnut Valley*.

Neighboring property owners donated the land and purchased subscriptions to construct Grace Church, and for nearly 200 years neighbors have cared for the building and grounds. When time-worn elements have required maintenance, historically accurate work has been performed using personal funds. The church is remarkably intact and in generally good condition for its age, but there are deferred structural and maintenance issues that require attention in order to preserve Grace Church for another hundred years. These include the removal of trees encroaching on the roof and gravestones; painting of exterior wood trim and interior plaster walls, woodwork, and

pews; and repair of rot beneath the floors caused by termites. Given its valuable architectural features, historic integrity, and cultural representations of Caroline County, Grace Church is an instructive treasure worthy of preserving. Located on State Route 2 just two miles south of the Spotsylvania County line, it is easily accessed for community outreach. With funding to support its repair, this significant historic landmark will be made available to resume safely public service activities and primary research by students in the Historic Preservation program at the University of Mary Washington.



Please consider Grace Episcopal Church among your current donations. Checks may be made out to the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization (tax I.D., 54-0505890) and mailed to Ranny Corbin, P.O. Box 3, Corbin, VA 22446.

Ranny and Champe Corbin, CHS Members



Flash Back: *Guess who?*

The picture to the left was recently donated to CHS from a Caroline county family. Can you identify the school, date, and/or any of the teachers or students?

This is a tough one

FLASH BACK:

The photo to the right was taken in the early 1990s, Scout members and leaders of local Boy Scout Troop 173 were taking a break while helping clean up the town for the Harvest Festival. Pictured left to right: Allen, Gray, Partin, Burruss, Brooks, Jarmen, Allen (back row), Day (back row), Brooks.

Great group of young men!



Confederate Monument Moved



If you have not seen or heard, the Caroline County Board of Supervisors, after a public hearing, recently voted to move the Confederate Monument which stood in front of the courthouse since 1906. The monument was dedicated to honor the men from Caroline County, Virginia, who joined local units to serve in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States. The board approved transferring the ownership of the monument to Green Lawn Cemetery. The monument was removed from the courthouse lawn and relocated to the Green Lawn Cemetery, just outside of Bowling Green. A rededication of the monument is being planned for 2021, the exact date to be announced when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. A concrete sidewalk has been installed in the location where the monument once stood.

New Members:

- Ranny and Champe Corbin, Corbin, VA.
- Susan and Jeff Sili, Bowling Green, VA.
- O. J. Moore, Fredericksburg, VA
- Lydell Fortune, Milford, VA
- Curtis M. Thomasco, Schaumberg, IL
- Darilyn Robinson, Ruther Glen, VA
- Larry Dane Brimmer, Tucson, AZ

Recent Donations and Loans:

- James Cropper – Donation of his father’s photographs of Caroline High School 1952 graduating class, football and baseball teams 1948 – 1951. number of local vintage schoolbooks.
- Loan – The National D-Day Memorial in Bedford County, Virginia, has agreed to loan CHS, the World War II U.S. Navy “foul weather” gear belonging to Caroline County native and World War II Navy veteran James (Jimmy) Farmer, Sr. Mr. Farmer donated his gear to the National D-Day Memorial many years ago. Jimmy used this gear when he participated in the D-Day invasion. His son, Jimmy Farmer, Jr., asked if they would loan it to CHS to complement the existing CHS exhibit on his father, who passed away in September 2018.
- James Presgraves, Jr. – Donation, collection of early 1900s letters, photos, and documents from the Presgraves, Boulware, and Motley families, formally of the Upper Zion area of Caroline County.
- Heather Hale – Donation of early 1800s trunk from Boulware family of Caroline County.
- Julie and Bill Harris – Donation of Sidney E. King mural with local scenes.
- Susan and Jeff Sili – Donation of painting by Sidney E. King.

The Caroline Historical Society, Inc., welcomes donations of items associated with Caroline County or local history. Items such as photographs, family histories, diaries, documents, family or business records, vintage maps, paintings, books on local history or historical research, vintage uniforms, or other items of historical interest. CHS would like to make copies of photos or documents if donation of the original is not a consideration. All donations are tax deductible.



Pictured left: Susan and Jeff Sili with a Sidney E. King painting recently donated to the Caroline Historical Society, Inc. The painting shows Union troops passing through Bowling Green, Virginia, in May 1864, just prior to the battle in Milford and the Battle of the North Anna River. Mr. King lived in Caroline County for many years and was nationally known for historical artwork of Jamestown, Revolutionary War, and Civil War eras.

Election of Officers and Board Members for 2021 to 2023

As 2020 closes out, so does the 2-year terms of our current officers and board members. In accordance with the CHS bylaws, “officers shall be elected biannually by majority vote of the membership at the annual membership meeting during odd numbered years.” Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is recommended the current officers and board members agree to maintain their current positions until such time the membership can vote on candidates for the new term (2021 – 2023). If any CHS member is interested or if a member would like to nominate a candidate for a board member or officer position, please contact Wayne Brooks by e-mail wbrooks@bealenet.com

CHS Membership Dues Reminder for 2020 and 2021

If you have not paid your 2020 dues or your upcoming 2021 dues, please forward payment to:
Caroline Historical Society
P.O. Box 324,
Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324

Individual membership – \$15.00 per year
Family membership – \$20.00 per year
Life membership – \$200 for life

General Contact Information

R. Wayne Brooks, president—wbrooks@bealenet.com Cell Phone (804) 513-9069
Facebook—Caroline Historical Society, Bowling Green, Va.
Web Site—www.carolinehistoricalsociety.org
Location—Sidney E. King Arts Center, 121 Main St., Bowling Green, Virginia 22427
Mailing Address—P.O. Box 324, Bowling Green, VA 22427-0324
Hours of Operation—Museum and exhibits closed to the public until further notice.