



CAROLINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

April 2023

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

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The Caroline Historical Society, Inc., will meet at 3 p.m. on Sunday, April 23, 2023, in the Caroline Community Services Center, 17202 Richmond Turnpike, Milford, VA 22514

From the President

The year 2023 marks the beginning of my new job as president of the Caroline Historical Society. I have lived in Caroline County my entire life and consider it the perfect place to live. I have been a member of CHS for over 20 years.

I consider myself an “ole soul” and love to hear the stories of Caroline’s past. I feel very fortunate to have met many people who have shared their memories and treasures with me.

My greatest pleasure as a CHS member has been coordinating the quarterly programs as the vice president of the organization for the past four years. The meetings are held in January, April, July, and October. We have had many wonderful speakers, been invited guests at various historical locations, and toured many amazing Caroline homes. Last October, through the cooperation of Ft. A.P. Hill, we were able to tour a number of local sites on the base to include Liberty Church, Mica School, The Lodge, and Bayersville School site. It was so exciting to see the faces of two ladies who had once lived there and now were able to visit the areas of their homes.

I believe history should be preserved and shared. If you also love history, I encourage you to join the Society and help us with the mission of preserving Caroline’s history. Your help would be deeply appreciated. I feel honored to be your president and look forward to the next two years.

Kathy McVay, President

CHS Annual Award for 2022 Presented



Each year the Annual Award Committee reviews names submitted for consideration for the CHS Annual Award. The award is presented to an individual, group, business, organization, or other entity that has made great strides in efforts to promote and preserve local history. CHS Past President R. Wayne Brooks presented the CHS Annual Award for 2022 to the Caroline County Board of Supervisors at the Caroline Board of Supervisors meeting on March 14, 2023. CHS appreciates their support over the years in assisting CHS achieve its goal of preserving and promoting Caroline’s rich history.

Pictured left to right above: Supervisors, Jeffrey S. Black (Western Caroline), Nancy Long (Port Royal), Clayton T. Forehand (Madison), Floyd W. Thomas (Mattaponi), Reginald L. Underwood (Reedy Church), R. Wayne Brooks (Past President CHS) and Jeffery M. Sili (Bowling Green)

Program for April 23, 2023, CHS Meeting

Please join us for the story of Sophia Hoomes, Old Mansion, and Bowling Green's forgotten estate Oak Ridge at the Caroline Historical Society meeting on Sunday, April 23, 2023, in the Caroline Community Services Center, 1702 Richmond Turnpike, Milford, Virginia, 22514. Susan Sili will be our guest speaker and will present an interesting program on the Hoomes family and their plantation homes at the "Old Mansion" and "Oak Ridge."

Susan Sili has been a freelance journalist and photographer for 40 years, published in numerous Virginia periodicals and along with the team from the local newspaper, has won several Virginia Press Association awards for stories on history, politics, and architecture. She has covered three governor inaugurations in depth for *The Caroline Progress*. A former local elected official, her interest in history and politics is generational, with her first ancestor serving in an elected position in Caroline in 1727. She is presently a senior contributor to the oldest ongoing online media and opinion outlet in the Commonwealth, *Bearing Drift*.



The Old Mansion (Bowling Green Farm)

The narrative of the colorful Hoomes clan and their original land holdings, represents the classic American story of a family of adventurers who carved homesteads from the wilderness of a new world and earned a place in the history of Virginia and the nation. In 1667, Major John Thomas Hoomes received a 3,000-acre land grant from King Charles II on Virginia's frontier along the "Mattaponi River Valley." The tract was situated far from the established settlements along the James River and in fact those who crossed into this land were deemed foolhardy, considering the fierceness of the Native American inhabitants. The Major, along with only a handful of others, also military men, originally built and defended fort-like structures on their homesteads in what would one day be Caroline County, Virginia.

While others came and went from the Mattaponi River Valley, Hoomes was successful, on this tract, his grandson, George Hoomes III, built what is today, one of the most famous examples of



Oak Ridge in the 1930s

an 18th century residential house, in the Chesapeake Bay area. Constructed around 1740, just a few hundred yards from an ancient Indian trail which would become the noteworthy "Old Stage Road," Hoomes called his estate "Bolling Green" after the family seat in England. The family took an active role in the development and building of Caroline County, but it would be George's son, John Hoomes, who would make his mark on the history of the county and subsequently his daughter, Sophia, who would live on to become the architect of the town.

In 1768, John Hoomes married Judith Churchill Allen. Thirteen boys were born to John and Judith, only four of whom would survive beyond childhood. Their last child, Sophia Hoomes, was born there in 1788, the only daughter. John was determined to rebuild the family's prominence and fortune which had been lost by a shiftless uncle. One of his first initiatives was the building of New Hope Tavern, a site less than a mile north from his residence at the intersection of the Stage Road and what was called the “rolling” Tobacco Road to the river at Port Royal. The “Stage Road” provided the route south to Williamsburg and north to Philadelphia and other key cities in the northern colonies. The tavern was completed before the Revolution and became a meeting place and stop-over for the founding fathers on their way to the famous gatherings which birthed the United States of America. When the Caroline Courthouse burned near what is the present-day entrance gate of A.P. Hill, John wisely bought the “rights” to the county court for seven hundred pounds and the court moved and met at New Hope Tavern, near *The Bolling Green*.

A trading settlement grew up around the tavern known as New Hope Village and traveling merchants brought their wares for sale on the lawn of the tavern on “Court Days.” In colonial times a tavern was much more than just a place to pass the night while traveling. Here people assembled to engage in political discussion, play cards, have dances, shooting matches, and many other amusements of the day. Hoomes' closest friend, John George Woolfolk, had the responsibility of overseeing the transportation on the Stage Road and with expansion and improvement of the road system, the settlement began to grow.



Entrance Door to “Oak Ridge”

In 1803, Hoomes donated the land, across the street from his tavern and \$5,000 for the erection of a permanent Courthouse but he died before the building could be started. By the time of his death in 1805, the Colonel was a millionaire many times over even by today standards with numerous landholdings and even owned 50,000 acres in an area which would become Bowling Green, Kentucky. He left his estate, including a property called Oak Ridge to his wife, Judith, and his son, John. Upon their deaths, it was divided among his living children including his daughter, Sophia.

Susan Sili, March 2023

Good Old Days

In 1948 when I was 13, my father gave me a dollar and told me to drive two miles from Collins Pond to Kidds Fork over a gravel unpaved road to put 5 gallons of gas in his new 1947 Chevrolet truck with three on the stick and a clutch. (**Note:** Many roads in Caroline were not paved in 1947. You could not get a driver’s permit until age 15, but I had to haul cucumbers and sell hogs in Richmond. The clutch was used to change gears as most vehicles did not have automatic transmissions.)

When I got to Kidds Fork, I went up steps to get on the store porch with a tall gas pump with a 10-gallon glass container on top. There was a pump handle on the side, so I manually pumped until there was 5 gallons of gas showing in the glass container. I got down on the ground with the gas hose and let the gas flow by gravity into the truck tank. I went inside and gave Mr. Covington the dollar for gas that was 19 cents a gallon and used the nickel to drink a coke,

probably the only one I had that month. (**Note:** Some did not have electric pumps to pump gas from the underground tank. Service stations like Carter Brothers and Jimmy Farmer in Bowling Green had electric pumps and attendants to pump gas in cars for customers. This provided a service for ladies and older people and kept some from driving away and not paying for gas. Credit cards and security cameras replaced the attendants. I was aware of the ways of the world. In 1946 and 1947, I went to Sparta School with wood stoves and out houses and helped a man on our farm work twenty acres of corn two years with two mules before we got a Ford 8N tractor from Mr. Pratt in Port Royal in 1948.)

Bernard Collins, CHS Historian, March 2023

Flashback



Moore Family Reunion, Lauraville, Caroline County, in the 1950s

Front Row – left to right.

William (Bill) S. Moore, Jr, Ned Moore, Scott Moore, Hunter Moore, Charlie Moore, Mary Moore, Lewis Moore holding Andrew Moore, Roger Moore holding Jimmy Moore,

Middle Row – left to right.

Gladys Moore (married to Lewis Moore) Rosemary Moore (daughter of William [Willie] S. and Lucille Moore and sister to William(Bill) S. Moore, Jr.), Ann Moore, (little girl leaning on Rosemary Moore) Grace Wright Moore(Grandmother) , James Edward Moore(Grandfather) Catherine Moore(married to Herbert Moore), Elizabeth Moore(married to Harold Moore)

Back Row left to right.

Raymond Moore, Estelle Moore (married to Raymond Moore), Schoene Moore (married to Roger Moore), William S. Moore (Willie) , Lucille C. Moore(married to Willie Moore), Herbert Moore, Harold Moore.

Photo courtesy of William (Bill) S. Moore, Jr.

Celebrating Local Women in History: ORA MAE WASHINGTON

A few years ago, I received the name of a person who should be honored as a “Women in History” in Caroline County. After completing some research, Ora Mae Washington is indeed a lady from Caroline who must be honored. Ora Mae Washington was the first prominent African-American athlete to dominate two sports, tennis and basketball.

Ora was born on a farm in Caroline County near File and her parents were James “Tommy” and Laura O. Young-Washington. Born in 1898 or 1899 (written birth certificates were not registered at that time), she was one of six children. Her parents were married eleven years. They raised tobacco and crops of corn and vegetables and were better off than some African American families who were sharecroppers during the turn of the century and beyond. She enjoyed playing sports especially basketball, learned to read and write and was reminded in the Jim Crow South, to “stay in your place”. A segregated school system offered her basic education but did not encourage her



Ora Mae Washington

interest in sports. During her teen years, in the rural South, Black tennis courts were constructed by Black colleges, but none were located near where Ora lived. When not needed to help on the farm, Ora played basketball with her friends.

During the “the Great Migration,” when African Americans move to the North, The Washington family moved to the Germantown section of North Philadelphia. In 1910 her mother died in childbirth and her grandmother, Isabella, moved in with the family. As a young girl, Ora attended the Young Women’s Christian Association Colored (YWCA) In Germantown, PA. Her sports career began here. “Ora began playing organized sports competitively when she was 25 years old. She chose to play tennis at the “Y” at the suggestion of an instructor and won her first national tournament in 1925 and her first national championship that same year. The ATA (American Tennis Association), established in 1916 was the oldest Black sports organization in the United States.... and Ora held the ATA National Title from 1929 to 1936. “



Ora Mae Washington tennis champion

Washington began her basketball career with the Germantown Hornets, a team formed at her local YWCA. “She helped the team post a 22-1 record and won the female national title in 1930. She joined the Philadelphia Tribunes in 1932...One of most dominant women’s sports teams in basketball history and remained with them for ten years. While she was with the team they won ten straight Women’s Colored Basketball World Championships and at one point, Washington was called ‘the best Colored player in the world.’”



Ora Mae Washington wins another match.

Washington had a twelve-year period when she was undefeated in tennis and earned 201 trophies for both tennis and basketball. Ora was forced to work as a domestic during her entire playing career. After retiring from major competition in 1948, she purchased an apartment complex which helped her live comfortably as she got older.” Even after her career ended, Ora continued to help younger generations learn to play tennis in her hometown of Germantown. “Ora died in Philadelphia in 1971. She was seventy-three. Five years later she was inducted into the Black Athletes Hall of Fame in 1976 and in 2009 was elected to the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tennessee.”



Ms. Washington passed away on December 21st, 1971, and was buried at the Jerusalem Baptist Church cemetery, Caroline County, Virginia.

Ora Mae Washington in later years.

[Filling in the Gaps in American History, Ora Mae Washington, “Queen of Tennis,](https://www.blackpast.org/African-american-history/Washington-ora-mae-1898-1971)
<https://www.blackpast.org/African-american-history/Washington-ora-mae-1898-1971>

[Ora Washington Biography Chronology, Awards, and Accomplishments, American Tennis Association, Further Information](https://sports.jrank.org/pages/5154/Washington-Ora-html) <https://sports.jrank.org/pages/5154/Washington-Ora-html>

[Ora Mae Washington: The Black Queen of Tennis](#), You Tube video, narrated by Renee Montgomery

Dale Brittle, Secretary CHS