

TVHS Observer

Volume I Number II



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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society is to preserve and promote the heritage of Tidewater Virginia by serving as an advocate for historic knowledge, archeology preservation and our geographic and cultural heritage.

The President's Message

We gaze out our window as the bright Autumn leaves slowly glide to the ground, while changing winds are all around us. As our lives have become more virtual, we are delighted that our members are eagerly joining the TVHS lectures via Zoom. TVHS has provided our Members this Fall with the opportunity to hear from two outstanding speakers. John Delano presented a lecture in October on the "Williamsburg Palisades 1634 and 1646". This was followed in November by Carl Lounsbury, who presented "Restoring Williamsburg". Both lectures were presented via Zoom and members' positive feedback made it even better!

There have been some changes to the Board of Directors over the past few months. We would like to thank Ruth Baur for her leadership as our President, 2018 – Fall 2020. Also, we thank Linda West for her work as Publicity Director. We welcome new Board Directors Carl Bass, Fred Seigel (Publicity), and Melissa McCue (Treasurer). We are also excited to have Sandy Reese join TVHS and produce the newsletter. As your new President, I am honored to be selected and will strive to find different ways to carry forward the TVHS mission while working with our dynamic Board. The Board Planning Committee has met and is beginning to refresh how TVHS can fulfill our Mission and better support our Membership and Community. Watch for some meaningful recommendations that will be implemented in early 2021. Your suggestions are always welcome by the Board.

TVHS Observer

On behalf of the TVHS Board of Directors, we send our Blessings for the upcoming holiday season. Take a moment to visualize the positives of 2020 and enjoy your personal celebrations while looking forward to sunshine in 2021!!

Sharon Short

TVHS PROGRAMS UPDATE

An early 2021 transition will be the Board approval of a well experienced Program Director, who will manage programing and trips. Any member interested in assisting with this key TVHS area, please email short43543@gmail.com.

Watch for the announcement of the January lecture via Zoom to be held **Sunday, JANUARY 17, 2021 at 2 pm.** TVHS is excited to have Robert Teagle, Executive Director of Christ Church and Museum, lead us on a Zoom video tour of Christ Church. This virtual journey will help us visualize through his discussion the influence of the Church of England in the early Colonial life in Virginia. Mark your calendar and make plans for this exciting tour via Zoom!!!

A Short History of the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society

Looking Back Reflections by Joe Burkhart

The Tidewater Virginia Historical Society was founded in 2013, but evolved out of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (in 2004 became Preservation Virginia or APVA). Two ladies in the year 1889 had been exploring the church ruins at Historical Jamestowne. They founded the first historical preservation society in America with a mission to preserve and protect Virginia's historical sites. In 1893, the APVA acquired a 22.5 acre parcel of Jamestowne Island containing the church tower, its graveyard, and nearby Confederate earthworks. Chapters were established for the preservation of history across the United States, with the founding chapter in Williamsburg. Overtime APVA had purchased various properties, but gradually its funds were stretched by increasing costs of preservation and maintenance; therefore they began to sell some of the properties.

TVHS Observer

The Williamsburg Chapter grew and flourished. It held its board meetings in an office on 3rd floor of the House of Burgesses, which was given to Preservation Virginia by Colonial Williamsburg, in appreciation for property given to Colonial Williamsburg in the early 20th century. Meetings were held there until 2012. Historical lectures and bus trips to the many historical houses and sites in the area were regular activities. Membership at one time totaled approximately 200.

During the first decade of this century the APVA determined to phase out its chapter system and gave up some properties which had been costly to keep up. The APVA did retain Jamestowne, the site of the fort, now located by Dr. William Kelso.

The Board then headed by Joe Burkart, VP Forrest Morgan, and others explored possible ways to maintain the historical focus. A key event was a visit to the Fairfield Foundation in Gloucester, an organization focused on Archaeology in Tidewater. This visit resulted in a decision to reinvent the chapter as an organization that would not only provide traditional lectures and trips, but also interact and encourage other historical groups throughout the area.

In 2013 the name Tidewater Virginia Historical Society was adapted to reflect the organization's wide area of interest with hopes to be a catalyst for other similar organizations throughout the Tidewater area. Since its founding TVHS has focused on two basic programs: lectures and presentations on the history and culture of Tidewater and archaeology from the Potomac to the North Carolina line and west to Appomattox.

The lectures and presentations have usually been held in downtown Williamsburg, but a few were held in Northern Neck sites. Events included a vast variety of subjects, with special memories of Historian Helen Roundtree's lectures on Pocahontas and her father Powhatan; Dr. William Kelso, founder of the Jamestowne fort; and Dr. Carl Lounsbury on the architecture of Tidewater. The trips were to numerous sites ranging from Stratford Hall and other sites on the Northern Neck; Gloucester and the Middle Peninsula; Appomattox and Petersburg in the west; and Franklin in the South.

The mission to promote archaeology was fulfilled by a series of digs over several years in cooperation with, and hosted by, Fairfield Foundation Archaeologists

TVHS Observer

(Dave Brown and Thane Harpole) at nearby New Quarter Park. (TVHS continues to annually sponsor these public digs and hosts TVHS member visits at the site.)

Now entering the 3rd decade of the century, and the 131st year of its historical evolution, TVHS continues to be a key organization for those seeking to preserve Tidewater Virginia's rich history.

DID YOU KNOW??



THIS HISTORIC MARKER IS LOCATED ON N. BOUNDARY STREET BETWEEN THE WILLIAMSBURG AT HOME SHOP AND A WILLIAM AND MARY DORM (CORNER OF PRINCE GEORGE STREET).

SCHOOL FOR BLACK CHILDREN.....

“The Associates of Dr. Bray, a London-based charity, founded a school for enslaved and free black children here in 1760. Located in Williamsburg at the suggestion of Benjamin Franklin, a member of the Associates, the school received support from the College of William & Mary. Anne Wager instructed as many as 400 boys and girls during her 14 years as teacher. In a culture hostile to educating African American, Wager taught the students principles of Christianity, deportment, reading, and possibly writing. The curriculum reinforced proslavery ideology but also spread literacy within the black community. The school moved from this site by 1765 and closed in 1774.”



Happy Thanksgiving!