

**Middle Peninsula African-American
Genealogical and Historical Society of Virginia**

804-758-5163

mpaagenealogicalsociety.org

Twitter: @mpaaghs (twitter.com/mpaaghs)

Facebook: facebook.com/mpaaghs

Bessida Cauthorne White

President

cauthornwhite@gmail.com

Annie M. Miller

Vice President

Gloria Waller

Secretary

gloinva1@gmail.com

Dr. Ronnie Sidney

Treasurer

Ronsidsr99@yahoo.com

Don Browne

Webmaster

d3browne@gmail.com

Acknowledgments

Middle Peninsula African-American Genealogical and Historical Society thanks today's speakers and all other individuals and organizations who have helped to make today's program a success. MPAAGHS is especially indebted to the following institutions and individuals for their continued support of MPAAGHS' mission and activities.

Angel Visit Baptist Church

The Reverend Dr. Carla E. Lightfoot, Pastor

Essex Public Library

FamilySearch

Library of Virginia

Michael C. Gresham

Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society, Inc.

**Middle Peninsula African-American
Genealogical and Historical Society**

MPAAGHS

2004 - 2014

*Celebrating 10 Years
of Exploring, Connecting, and Documenting
African-American Families*

Genealogy Workshop

Saturday, November 8, 2014

1:00 p.m.

Angel Visit Baptist Church
Dunnsville, Virginia

Researching the history of a people

Middle Peninsula African-American Genealogical and Historical Society of Virginia (MPAAGHS) was convened in September of 2004 by genealogists Gloria Waller and Bessida Cauthorne White. The organization's mission is to create and provide opportunities to encourage and enable African Americans to research, document, and publish their family histories and genealogies. MPAAGHS' focus is the Middle Peninsula, Virginia counties of Essex, Middlesex, King and Queen, King William, Gloucester, and Mathews, and the Northern Neck, Virginia counties of Westmoreland, Richmond, Northumberland, and Lancaster. However, anyone who is interested in African-American genealogy and history is invited to join and is likely to find something of interest.

MPAAGHS meets on the second Saturday of each month, except July and August, at 11:00 a.m., usually at the Essex Public Library in Tappahannock, Virginia. From time to time meetings are held at other sites of interest. Organization dues are \$20 per calendar year.

Highlights of MPAAGHS' ten-year history include:

- The 2005 collaboration with the James River Blues Society and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to place a highway marker in the town of Tappahannock in honor of blues musician William Moore.
- The 2009 collaboration with FamilySearch and the Virginia Historical Society to create the Virginia African-American Funeral Programs Project; nearly 10,000 funeral programs have been digitized, indexed, and now appear on the FamilySearch website.
- The participation by MPAAGHS members in three FamilySearch indexing projects—the Virginia Freedmen Bureau records, the 1940 census, and MPAAGHS' own funeral programs project.
- The creation and maintenance of a comprehensive website that provides a panoply of resources for the researcher, including articles on genealogy and family history, links to local, state, and national resources, a calendar of events, tidbits on local history, and a surnames list. Created by Dr. Ronnie Sidney, the website is now maintained by webmaster Don Browne.
- Collaborations with the Middlesex County Museum to include a 2012 concert by the Northern Neck Chantey Singers and a 2014 program on slave-era African-American cemeteries.
- Facilitation of the meeting of dozens of persons with relatives they had not previously known.
- The participation of a strong and dedicated cadre of members.

**“Celebrating 10 Years of Exploring, Connecting,
and
Documenting African-American Families”**

Statement of Occasion Gloria Waller

Welcome The Reverend Dr. Carla E. Lightfoot
Pastor, Angel Visit Baptist Church

MPAAGHS – A Ten-Year Retrospective Bessida Cauthorne White

Introduction of Presenters Don Browne

African-American Research at the Library of Virginia Cara Griggs
Reference Archivist
Library of Virginia

*Stories of Pre-Civil War African Americans Found at the
Library of Virginia* Greg Crawford
Local Records Program Manager
Library of Virginia

Questions and Answers

Remarks *****

Viewing of Displays

Reception

Middle Peninsula African-American Genealogical and Historical Society Timeline - Selected Events

2004

- September Organizing meeting at Essex Public Library
- December "History of the Rappahannock Industrial Academy" was the subject of a panel discussion with Thomas Harris, Ruth Corbin Morris, and Laura Jane Wyatt Tildon

2005

- January "Tips for Searching Family Trees," presented by Bessida Cauthorne White
- February "Tips for Researching Free People of Color," presented by Gloria Waller
- March "Whispers from the Dust: The Freedmen Records and African-American Family History," presented by Dr. Darrell Walden
- May "Research on Five King William County, Virginia African-American Families," presented by Dr. Alvin C. Lomax
- June Field Trip to Library of Virginia
- October "Use of County Court Records in Genealogical Research," presented by Carolyn Clark, Deputy Clerk, Essex County Circuit Court
- December Dedication of William Moore Highway Marker
- December "Using Family Tree Maker Software," presented by Bessida Cauthorne White, assisted by Dr. Ronnie Sidney

2006

- February "Protecting and Preserving Family Collections," presented by Dr. Edward D. C. "Kip" Campbell, Director, Collection Management Services, Library of Virginia
- April "The Line that Leads to You: Telling Your Family Story in Fabric," presented by fabric artist Janice Williams
- June Field trip to J.C. Graves Museum with tour conducted by Nannie Banks Taylor, curator
- December Author Howard Adams discussed his book *Family Wisdom: Celebrating 200+ Years of Love and Strength in an African-American Family*

2007

- February "Virginia Freedmen Extraction and Indexing Project," presented by Dr. Darrell Walden and Bessida Cauthorne White

March "Preserving Works on Paper," presented by paper conservator Susan Butler-Walters

2008

- January Presentation of historic photograph to St. John's Baptist Church by Thomas C. Harris
- February "Collecting Oral Histories," presented by Christina Draper, Director, African-American Heritage, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities
- March "Remembering Together: Stories of Obstacles and Opportunity" was the title of an oral history session conducted by Dr. Barbara Finkelstein, professor, University of Maryland, College Park; ten African Americans were interviewed about their educational experiences in the Middle Peninsula during the early and mid twentieth century
- October Field trip to King William County Museum with tour conducted by Dr. Alvin C. Lomax

2009

- February MPAAGHS created Black History Month display at Essex Public Library, Tappahannock, VA
- March Field Trip to King and Queen County Courthouse with tour of record room conducted by Deputy Circuit Court Clerk Vanessa Porter and tour of King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum conducted by Museum Manager Ellen White
- September Creation of Virginia African-American Funeral Programs Project, a collaboration with FamilySearch and the Virginia Historical Society; nearly 11,000 programs are collected
- October MPAAGHS 5th anniversary workshop "Climbing Your Family Tree: African-American Genealogy in a Nutshell" held at Angel Visit Baptist Church; speakers included Selma Stewart, Vanessa D. Porter, Edwin B. Washington, Jr., and Ann Cates

2010

- March "Voices of Freedom – African-American Civil War Contributions," featuring re-enactors Wesley Wilson, Chauncey Herring, et. al. at Angel Visit Baptist Church; collaboration with the Essex County Museum and Historical Society and the Essex County Sesquicentennial Commission
- April Reception for contributors to funeral programs project

- May Monthly meeting at the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society, Saluda, VA
- June Lecture by Sarah Dillard Pope, Executive Director, Menokin Foundation; Menokin was the home of Francis Lightfoot Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence
- June Co-sponsored "Juneteenth: Stories and Songs of Emancipation and Freedom" with the National Park Service's George Washington Birthplace National Monument
- November Authors Wesley E. Pippenger and Suzanne P. Derieux discussed the work that led to their book *Essex County Virginia Cemeteries, Volume 1 - County Church Cemeteries*

2011

- March Field trip to the Library of Virginia and The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia in Richmond
- May Field trip to the Family History Center, Tappahannock
- October Author Ronald Roy Seagrave talked about his book *Jefferson's Isaac: From Monticello to Petersburg*, a biography of Isaac, a man who was born enslaved at Monticello in 1775.
- November Monthly meeting at the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society, Saluda, VA

2012

- February "The 1940 Census: Countdown to April 2, 2012," presented by Brent Morgan
- February Concert by The Northern Neck Chantey Singers at St. Clare Middle School, Locust Hill, VA. Co-sponsored with Middlesex County Museum and Middlesex County NAACP
- April Meeting at Fishing Bay Estates in Deltaville, VA, hosted by Davaline Taliaferro, who led the group on tours of the site of the Stingray Point fugitive surrender, of a replica of the Stingray Point Lighthouse, and of the Deltaville Maritime Museum
- May Visit to the historic Jubilee Farms in King William, VA, plantation owned by Dr. Walter P. Lomax upon which his ancestors were enslaved. Hosted by Dr. Walter P. Lomax, Mary Claire Lomax, Esquire, and Dr. Alvin Lomax
- November MPAAGHS webmaster Don Browne shared his finding of a set of genealogical papers at the Library of Virginia and the impact it had on his family research in Middle Peninsula. He also gave a presentation on the MPAAGHS website mentioning the purpose of the site, the resources available, and how to navigate the site

2013

- January Roundtable discussion on research techniques and tips for using Internet sites such as ancestry.com and familysearch.org; discussion led by Louis Chamberlain and Bessida Cauthorne White
- February Ron Mihills gave a presentation on using Family Tree Maker genealogy software
- April Authors Camilla Lewis Tramuel and LaVonne Patterson Allen discussed their new book *Early African Americans in New Kent County, Volume 1, Early Education – Colored Schools*
- April Field trip to Virginia Baptist Historical Society in Richmond with tour of exhibition "free indeed"
- June Dr. Alvin C. Lomax gave a presentation on the Negro Organization Society
- September Participated in a commemoration at Historic Christ Church in Lancaster, VA of Robert Carter's 1791 Deed of Manumission freeing more than 500 enslaved Africans
- October "Using Ancestry.com to Find your Family – Past and Present," presented by Dr. Ronnie Sidney
- December Genealogist, blogger, and lay historian Percy E. White II gave a presentation entitled "My Road to the Past and Present"

2014

- January Meg Hughes, Director of Collections and Interpretation/Curator of Archives, and Jackie Mullins, Registrar/Collections Manager, Valentine Museum, gave a presentation on "Preserving Paper, Photographs, and Textiles"
- February College of William and Mary anthropologist Dr. Michael Blakey talked about his "Remembering Slavery, Resistance and Freedom Project" and its search for historic African-American cemeteries in Virginia. David Brown, archaeologist and co-director of the Fairfield Foundation, described the cemetery component of the Foundation's work in the Middle Peninsula; co-sponsored by the Middlesex County Museum and Historical Society
- October Monthly meeting held at the King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum in King and Queen Court House, VA with a tour of the museum and lunch provided by Museum Manager Ellen White