



Celebrating and Commemorating Local Black History

We're offering everyone
FREE ONLINE VIEWING OF VIDEO RECORDINGS
of 10 great programs and lectures on Black History topics
that LVHS hosted or co-hosted in 2020-2022!

Visit www.LancasterVaHistory.org for the complete list and links.

Free access will be available through April 30 as part of the LVHS "History for Everyone" initiative, with funding support from Walmart and the Wiley Foundation.

Black Voters Cast First Ballots in 1867

Lancaster History Notes by Karen Hart

On October 22, 1867, more than 93,000 Black men voted in Virginia for the first time and their participation significantly shaped the state's Reconstruction-era politics. After the Civil War, Congress passed the 14th Amendment to effectively provide citizenship rights for Black men and women and voting rights for adult Black men. The Virginia General Assembly failed to ratify this amendment as required by Congress under the Reconstruction Act of 1867, so Virginia was placed under federal military rule. The Act also obligated states of the former Confederacy to call conventions to write new state constitutions.

Voters in Virginia were asked to vote for or against holding a constitutional convention and to choose delegates for the convention if it was held. Officers of the U.S. Army oversaw the registration of voters and supervised the election. Congress required that Black men be allowed to vote in this election and to run for seats as convention delegates.

The army officers recorded the names of the white and black voters in separate poll books for each county, which have been preserved in the collection of the Library of Virginia (LVA). The poll books for the Black voters were recently digitized on LVA's website for "Virginia Untold: the African American Narrative." From these records, the Lancaster Virginia Historical Society has transcribed and compiled the names of the 472 Black voters from all four of Lancaster's districts into one alphabetical list. The list is available at LancasterVaHistory.org along with a short tutorial video on how to find and use the original documents online.

According to Encyclopedia Virginia, 105,832 Black men and 120,101 white men registered for the 1867 election statewide. However, "many white men who opposed Congressional Reconstruction decided not to register, while others were still legally unable to register and vote because

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List of Colored persons voting for and against a Convention, on 22^d Oct. 1867

1	Anderson Isaac	31	Henderson George
2	Ball Thomas	32	Jones Stephen
3	Braaten Hapton	33	Jones Spie
4	Brown John	34	Johnson Moses
5	Burrie Elyson	35	Johnson Lewis
6	Carter Abies	36	Jackson John
7	Chilman Lewis	37	Jones Robert
8	Coats Aramus	38	Jones Henry
9	Courtney William	39	Jordan Benjamin
10	Campbell James	40	Jones Martin
11	Carter James	41	Jones Elias
12	Cornway Isaac J.	42	Jones David
13	Davenport John	43	Jones James

Detail from 1867 "Poll Book for Colored Voters, Courthouse, 2nd District, Lancaster County, Va." (Library of Virginia).



In Memoriam
Dr. Francis J. "Frank" Kober, Jr.
LVHS President

LVHS sadly shares news that our Board President, Frank Kober, passed away February 17, 2023. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Bonnie and their families. Through Frank's many years as an LVHS board member, we came to know him as a dedicated leader, caring educator, thoughtful historian, and personal friend. We will all feel his loss but also look to the inspiration and purpose he instilled as we work to carry on his legacy.

A Service of Remembrance will be held Saturday, March 11, 2023, 1:00 p.m. at Mount Olive Baptist Church (Northumberland). Details at www.waddyfuneralhome.com.

Frank served on the LVHS Board from 2007-2015 and 2017-2023, including four years as President. He was a leader on many committees and was especially passionate about the Closing the Gap African American Oral History Project and Black Voices programs. Frank received his M. Ed. from Coppin State University (Baltimore, MD) and his Doctorate in Education Policy Studies from Temple University (Philadelphia, PA). During his 45 years as an educator, he authored three nonfiction books in history and education and two college textbooks. He taught education, reading, and history courses at Coppin State University, and served as a public school teacher. Later in his career, he was an Associate Dean, Department Chair, and Special Assistant to the President at Coppin. He also served as a political consultant to the Baltimore City Teachers Association, the Maryland State Education Association, and the National Education Association, and was a member of several gubernatorial committees. In addition to LVHS, Frank was active in the Northumberland County Community Center and local chapters of the NAACP, Democrats, and Lions Club.

Historic District Harmony

Lancaster History Notes by Karen Hart

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1983 designation of the Lancaster Court House Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Also, at the time of this writing, three buildings in the district—the fire-devastated Lancaster Tavern and two residences locally known as the Purple House and Yellow House—are up for sale by auction. So, now is an apt time to consider the past, present, and future of the court house village.

Nearly a century after the 1651 establishment of Lancaster County, the village known as Lancaster Court House became the county seat in 1742 when the court moved from Queenstown on the lower Corrotoman River. Inhabitants of the county had petitioned the Virginia colonial government, “complaining of the inconvenient situation of their Court House which is inaccessible to many of the people except by water and that at a very dangerous landing.” Consequently, the Governor ordered the county to build a new courthouse, prison, pillory, and stocks near the headwaters of the Corrotoman in the field where the militia usually mustered. That courthouse was replaced in 1861 with a new one just several yards away.

To support the business of the court and the visiting crowds on court days, the county seat grew into a social and economic center with a mix of public buildings, private homes, and commercial establishments like taverns and stores to provide food, lodging, and mercantile services. The National Register nomination form stated that the Lancaster Court House Historic “preserves the quintessential character of the rural Virginia courthouse village....Virtually free of modern intrusions, the district maintains a visually appealing harmony of scale, color, texture, and materials, all within a larger agrarian setting.” It concluded that the district “remains in the later years of the 20th century a simple, rural courthouse town with structures dating from the mid-18th to the mid-20th centuries, all harmoniously situated along the county’s major thoroughfare.”



Buildings on north side of Rt 3: (from right) c. 1790 Lancaster Tavern (fire-damaged); current LVHS Library in 1950-60s commercial building (the only "non-contributing" property in the Historic District); c. 1900 former Lancaster Hotel/Giese Store; c.1910 former Post Office/Law Office; visible in distance, 1937 cupola and pediment additions to 1861 courthouse.

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March 29 Online 'Estate Sale' Auction Attic Treasures and Great Garage Finds



DONATED GOODS WANTED!

**Drop off at the Museum through
MARCH 10th on
WEDNESDAYS or FRIDAYS 11:00-3:00**

**Or call Rebecca George 804-761-3240
to arrange for other days/times.
(Sorry, we cannot pick up items)**

household goods
antiques
books
lawn and garden

home décor
collectibles
sports gear
seasonal decorations

small furniture
jewelry
craft and hobby
and LOTS MORE!

kitchenware
artwork
tools

(No clothes or dirty/broken/unsafe items)

HOW THE AUCTION WORKS:

Auction handled by Brad Smith of Big Red Auctions to benefit LVHS.

After March 22: Register, view photos of items, and bid early at bigredauctions.hibid.com

Wednesday, March 29, 7:00 PM until the end: The real action starts as bidding closes on a rolling basis; one at a time, each item/lot will be featured with a call for final bids. Get ready for a little competitive fun and keep clicking to emerge as the winner!

Thursday, March 30, 10:00-3:00: Pick up your purchases at the LVHS Museum. You must bring your own loading help, boxes, supplies, etc. Any items not picked up during the stated period will be deemed abandoned. Third-party shipping may be available on some items for an additional fee and by advance arrangement with Brad.

More Things to Know:

- All bids are final and are a binding agreement to purchase at that price.
- All items are sold in as-is/where-is condition. We will do our best to let you know of any flaws with the items. No returns, exchanges, or warranties.
- 5.3% Sales Tax and a 10% "Buyer Premium" (processing fee) will be added to all purchases.
- Sales transactions are handled directly by Big Red Auctions. Although your purchase will benefit LVHS, no portion of your payment will qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation.
- Be sure to read all the terms and conditions on the auction website!

Spring Hours of Operation

Museum remains closed in March.

Re-opens April 5 (Wed, Thu, Fri 10:00-4:00)

Research Library Re-opens in March by Appointment Only

(1867 Black Voters, continued)

of their Confederate pasts. On election day...a significant number of registered white voters refused to take part, and African Americans actually cast more votes than white men by a substantial margin. In most cities and counties white men voted overwhelmingly against holding the convention at all, and Black men voted overwhelmingly in favor. Moreover, almost all Black men voted for candidates who favored making significant reforms to the old state constitution, while most white voters opposed those candidates. As a result, men who supported radical reform won a majority of seats in the convention.”

In Lancaster County, 472 Black men voted. The poll book for the Courthouse district is the only digitized one that includes a statement of the election results: “For a convention” were 97 Black voters and 3 white voters; “Against a convention” were zero Black voters and 68 white voters. All 97 of the Black voters and one white voter chose Richard S. Ayer, a Republican from New York living in the Heathsville area, and Ephraim Nash, a Republican from Maine living in the Warsaw area, as convention delegates. The other white voters cast ballots for F. A. Davis or W. F. Dunaway. Nash and Ayer won the overall election to represent the region of Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Richmond counties.

Among the 104 delegates elected across Virginia, 24 were Black men. Some had formerly lived in slavery and others were free-born, including William Breedlove, a property owner, blacksmith, and ferry operator from Tappahannock who represented Essex and Middlesex. The election and convention opened the way for more Black citizens to participate in government. From 1867-1895, nearly 100 Black Virginians served in the two houses of the General Assembly or in the Constitutional Convention. Armistead Nickens of Lancaster, who voted in the 1867 election and is recorded in the poll book, went on to serve from 1871-1875 as the county’s first and only elected Black representative in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Virginia’s new constitution contained several significant provisions. It secured Black suffrage by granting the vote to all adult men; required the General Assembly to create a statewide system of free public schools for all children; reformed local government on a more democratic model; gave the governor veto power over legislation; and established a process for constitutional amendments. It was ratified by Virginia voters in 1869, then approved by Congress in 1870, as required under the Reconstruction Acts in order for Virginia to re-join the Union.

This constitution was replaced in 1902 by one that allowed General Assembly to revise voting and registration laws. The political change ultimately enabled the government of Virginia to obstruct the rights of Black citizens to vote and hold public office, and supported institutionalized segregation during the “Jim Crow” era.

Sources:

“African Americans and Politics in Virginia 1865-1902,” at encyclopediavirginia.org

“Remaking Virginia: Transformation Through Emancipation” Online Exhibition, Library of Virginia, at virginiamemory.com

Original records: Poll Books for “Colored Voters” [1867], Lancaster County [4 districts], Library of Virginia, Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative Digital Collection, at virginiamemory.com

(Historic District, continued)

The bounds of the historic district established in 1983 comprised 21 major structures along Rt 3 and the open fields behind them. These included the imposing antebellum courthouse with 1937 Classical Revival renovations, c.1797 clerk of court office, and c.1820 jail. The c.1800 “Lancaster Tavern” used as a restaurant had previously been a tavern, family home, and dentist office, while the c.1830 “Lancaster House” was variously used as family home, tavern, and boarding house before becoming the historical society museum.

Most of the wood frame buildings dated from 1880-1910 and included Trinity Episcopal Church, the large “Lancaster Hotel” turned into professional offices, a former post office/law office, and several private residences. Some later dwellings were built 1930-1960, but their modest scale and frame construction maintained the general appearance of the district. One of those, the former Catherine Chilton House, will soon undergo major interior renovations to become the Lancaster Virginia Historical Society’s new, expanded genealogy and research library, while keeping the original exterior design to stay in character with the historic district. Also of note, the 2010 new judicial center took careful visual cues from its surroundings while meeting modern needs.

The Historical Society encourages all property owners, or potential buyers, to consider various forms of preservation and adaptive re-use, and to remember the important role of historic buildings as physical records of the past and storytellers for their many inhabitants.