

Isle of Wight County Historical Society – Member News – December 2021

From the Board of IWCHS

<http://www.iwchs.com/>

Carolyn Keen, President

Nicholas Blevins, VP

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Please **RENEW** membership and return the **MEMBER INFORMATION** form.

DUES for 2022 - please also pay this if not done already - **And**

THANKS for those of you who add a contribution with your dues!

This is sent also to prior members who let dues lapse 2 or more years.

Come back as we begin a new chapter - see **EXCITING NEWS** below!



Isle of Wight County Historic Federal-style 1820-era Clerk of Court office, enlarged in 1822 and nearly doubled in 1937. It has been empty for about a decade but will soon be renovated and re-occupied with public meeting areas AND a new home for IWCHS meetings and Archives.

A long-term lease was recently signed with the County. The IWCHS will use a portion of the 1820 clerk's office. We will also be able to share the use of other public spaces in the building for meetings and programs. This generally assures preservation of the building and gives us a long dreamed-of place for archives and electronic records as a history research center. We are aware of some collections of important local history documents that are scattered throughout the county, most not in controlled storage environments or accessible for research. This new IWCHS location for historic archives will provide for proper storage for physical books, documents and photographs and a secure place computer and scanning equipment for high resolution digital copies of what is collected and loaned to us. We now must organize an accessible and searchable database for these records so they are available to Isle of Wight County residents, descendants and researchers. They will also be just a few buildings away from the County records that are essentially complete back to the beginning of county government in

the early 1600s. This is the beginning of a years-long project! We are looking forward to making this vision a reality and thank you for your continued support!

IW approves Historical Society lease

The Smithfield Times, Tuesday, December 14, 2021

By [Stephen Faleski](#)

Isle of Wight's Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to approve a lease agreement on Dec. 9 that will allow the county's historical society to meet and store records in the old court clerk's office.

The 25-year lease requires rent in the amount of \$1 annually, with the Isle of Wight County Historical Society having the option to make one payment of \$25 for the entire term.

In return, the society will gain access to a 208-square-foot room in the front of the building and a 374-square-foot room in the back for its archives.

The entire detached building measures 2,511 square feet. It served as the circuit court clerk's office until a new courthouse was built in 2010 that moved the clerk's office and courts into a single building. Since that time, the old clerk's office has remained vacant.

Isle of Wight's Board of Supervisors had previously discussed the idea of partnering with the historical society on a renovation of the old clerk's office last February after the society's negotiations with the town of Smithfield to use the historic Wombwell House on West Main Street as its headquarters fell through. The Wombwell House was demolished Dec. 1.

Per the proposed lease agreement, the society would be required to reimburse the county for up to \$25,000 of the cost of the renovation, and would be responsible for maintaining the dedicated heating and air conditioning system in the document storage room once it's installed. The cost of all other utilities would be paid by the county.

NEXT PROGRAMS

We regret we have not been able to have meetings and programs in 2020 and 2021. We look forward to renewal in 2022.

May 15 or 22 - tbd. Thompson M. Mayes, "Why Old Places Matter"

His books of the same title are available from the IWCHS

Tom Mayes is Deputy General Counsel for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He has specialized in both corporate and preservation law since he joined the National Trust in 1986. For details see

<https://savingplaces.org/stories/why-do-old-places-matter>

<http://sofa.aarome.org/2013-2014/thompson-m-mayes>

That same weekend there will also be for members a self-guided driving tour of "Old Places" in the county that are featured in the 2007 Second Edition of "Historic Isle of Wight" by Helen Haverty King with updated photos by Carolyn Keen.

A few of these books are still available for members