



Goochland County Historical Society Newsletter

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FREEDOM OF CHOICE Integration of Goochland High School

At this site in 1965, eleven years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial segregation of public schools unconstitutional, fourteen Black students desegregated Goochland High School. Despite Virginia's Massive Resistance efforts, these students, with the support of their parents, community and the NAACP, obtained equal access to education. All went on to be successful in their future endeavors.

Listed by entering grade level, they were:

Ronald Jewell, 12th	Rose Ellis, 8th
Frances Copeland, 11th	Linda Glover, 8th
Priscilla Copeland, 10th	Diane Holland, 8th
Aretha Robinson, 10th	Michaëlle O. Johnson, 8th
John Jewell, 9th	Darnell McCowin, 8th
Patricia Diane Lewis, 9th	Eva J. Miles, 8th
Jacqueline Carroll, 8th	Sara Robinson, 8th

ERECTED BY THE GOOCHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY #13

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GOOCHLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Society's History Center is located next to the Goochland Courthouse Green at 2924 River Road West (Route 6)

Office hours:

Wednesday–Friday, 10:00–3:00
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the unveiling of the Goochland County Historical Society's third historic marker in late February, Goochland celebrated the courage of 14 young Black students who integrated the previously all white county high school in 1965. They were not alone. Across the county, which at that time had three Black elementary schools and two white elementary schools, a total of 62 Black students took advantage of the Freedom of Choice program to transfer to white schools. As a result, there were Black students in every grade, in every school, with the exception of Grade Six at Goochland Elementary.

It has taken us almost 60 years to publicly recognize the achievement of these students who ended a dark period of our history, and opened a brighter future for us all. This marker will be a permanent recognition of what is possible when we all come together.

On the page opposite you will see a story about a lighter moment in the county's history. In retrospect, it seems it was a time of innocence when media misinformation was a subject of mirth rather than consternation. Yet humor has long been a powerful salve in binding the wounds of community.

When the Tuckahoe Village Shopping Center opened in 1975, just across Tuckahoe Creek in Henrico County, it tantalized Goochland residents with the nearest McDonald's restaurant. At the time there was not a single national franchise restaurant in Goochland, which boasted not a single stoplight in the entire county. Many local residents were intrigued to find out what was under the Golden Arches.

It may be apocryphal, but this is the story I heard from former Historical Society President Joe Scales, speaking of Former President and Society Founder Elie Weeks. When Joe asked Elie if he had been to the new McDonald's restaurant, Elie said he had, but he would never go back. "I sat there for almost half an hour," said Elie, "and no one ever came to my table to take my order."

On page 6 former President Christina J. Dunn gives a glimpse into the history of one of our now almost deserted cross-road communities, Fife. When Haden's Store was taken down in the mid-1980s, it was a community affair. Local gospel singer Kenny Rowe solicited the help of local farmer John Wright, who had a large tractor and a long steel cable. As Kenny tells the story, "We lassoed the top of the building, closed the road, and pulled it down. Only one brick went into the road."

The county lost a landmark but Rowe got hardwood flooring and rustic paneling for his new house being built up the road. The house across from the old store was then the residence of Joe and Roselle Scales, both former Society Presidents. Joe regretted the loss of the landmark and Roselle was heard to lament "I have lost my pantry."

Sincerely,

Robin Lind, President

APRIL FOOLS': NEWSPAPER LAMPOON EDITION APPEARED 37 YEARS AGO

"Not The Gazette" was a lampoon edition of the local weekly, *The Gazette*, written, edited and published by four main co-conspirators with the help of several dozen "henchmen," all of whom were identified by first name in a printer's prayer on the editorial page. The large format, broadsheet newspaper was entirely funded by advertising from local businesses, who were poking fun at themselves.

Printed with great secrecy at the Tri-County Printing and Publishing Co. in Hopewell on Tuesday, March 31, 1987, the newspapers were brought back to Goochland Court House, and distributed from the main post office under the watchful eye of Postmaster Richard Harvey. Advance copies were hand-delivered to Richmond newspaper, radio, and television station offices that evening.

On Wednesday morning many county officials wore lapel buttons proclaiming "OUCH! I've been Lamponed by Not The Gazette" and sported small Band-Aids on their faces. Those included Postmaster Harvey, Clerk of Court Louis "Doc" Parrish, Treasurer "Mac" Amos, Commissioner of the Revenue Billy Tucker and even Commonwealth's Attorney Eddie Carpenter.

Media coverage was widespread, with television coverage on Channel 12, columnist Steve Clark in the *Richmond News-Leader*, and a playful reading of several stories by WRVA's beloved Alden Aaroe.



The lead story was a fanciful blockbuster proposing that the overturning of an Indian treaty by the Supreme Court reverted county boundary lines to those of 1727, and restored jurisdiction to the former states of West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Another story announced the acquisition of Sabot Hill Farm for a new state capital. Still another announced that Garrison Keeler would be the Grand Marshal for the Goochland Day Parade. One story announced a hydroelectric dam across the James River at Maidens, and another said Dominion Power was proposing a wind generating plant.

A classified ad for C&P Telephone asked residents to place socks over their telephones in preparation for cleaning the lines with high-pressure air.

It was, in the words of one co-conspirator, "A love letter to the county."

An anonymous donor has now contributed to the GCHS a bundle of 50 copies from the original printing which have been in storage since 1987. They are available for sale at The History Center for those who did not save their original or who were not able to move into the county in time to receive one 37 years ago.

"An ideal keepsake" said GCHS President Robin Lind, "for anyone who loves to mix history with flat-out fun, whimsy and balderdash."

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Norman Brooks • Mary Campbell • Connie Cover • Barbra & Terry McLaughlin • Susan Quarles
 Jessica Stanley • Brandy Watford • Robin & Sallie Wells • Sally & Mark Wittkofski • Susan Young

FREEDOM OF CHOICE MARKER CEREMONY

“It was the best of times. It was the worst of times... It was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

—Charles Dickens,



Linda Glover Minor

Recounting the events of nearly 60 years ago, former student Linda Glover Minor gently explained what it had been like to be an 8th grade Black student entering the previously all-white Goochland High School in 1965.

Armed only with faith and their parents’ advice: “Be respectful, no talking in class, do your best, know we love you,” Mrs. Minor was one of eight teenage Black 8th graders, all girls, who

participated in the Freedom of Choice program that ended segregation in Goochland County schools.

There was intimidation. There was vulgarity. There were spitballs in class. There was tripping in the hallways. But there was also encouragement. Librarian, Helen Monteiro offered a place of refuge, with books galore. There were friendships. There was success.

Mrs. Minor went on to graduate, earn a degree at Virginia Commonwealth University, and return to teach history at Goochland Middle School in a career spanning 33 years.

On the brisk but sunny afternoon of February 25, 2024, Mrs. Minor addressed more than 250 people gathered in front of the old Goochland High School, 1800 Sandy Hook Road, as keynote speaker at the unveiling of Goochland County Historical Society’s newest historic marker.

The marker recalls and honors the time in 1965 when, along with 13 other courageous Black students, Mrs. Minor participated in the program which put an end to racially segregated schools in our county. Following her speech, she introduced former student

Ronald Jewell, the only Black 12th grader that year, who gave a personal reflection on the impact on his education and subsequent career.

Recalling his memories of that period, Mr. Jewell remembered seeing in the national news, “Soldiers were guarding Black kids, and I said I’ll be damned. I’m going down there. I’m not afraid. I’m just mad.”

Mr. Jewell was followed by Wilford Robinson, Sr., 92, the father of Aretha and Sarena Robinson, two of the other eighth-graders. He spoke movingly of the difficult decision about whether to send his children to school in Goochland or Henrico and the support from Goochland Schools Superintendent Ben Carpenter. He also lauded the bravery of the children and the quiet resolve of other parents who were determined their children should have an equal opportunity for education.

Other speakers included Greg Haley, vice president of the Goochland Branch of the NAACP; County Administrator Vic Carpenter; Schools Superintendent Michael Cromartie; the Rev. Adlai Allen, pastor of Chief Cornerstone Baptist Church; and Robin Lind, the president of the Goochland County Historical Society who welcomed those attending on behalf of the Society.

On behalf of the Rotary Club of Goochland, Vern Fleming, club president and himself a Freedom of Choice student in neighboring Louisa County, presented a Commemorative Memento to each of the students as they collectively removed the veil to reveal the marker.

Prior to 1965, with about 1100 Black students



Ronald Jewell, Linda Glover Minor

and 900 White, Goochland had two White elementary schools (Goochland and Cardwell) and three Black elementary schools (Randolph, Kanawha and Byrd), a White High School and a Black High School. Despite the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision which ruled segregated schools unconstitutional, and the 1964 passage of the Civil Right Act, schools in Goochland – as in most of Virginia – had remained segregated. As a result of a lawsuit filed by a group of students and their parents, the Goochland School Board finally adopted the "Freedom of Choice" plan in June 1965 which led to the integration of all county schools.



over Minor and Robin Lind

The marker lists the names of the 14 students who integrated Goochland High School. Erected by the Historical Society, it commemorates the courage, grace, and commitment of the students, their parents, church congregations and the quiet resolve of a handful of community leaders who challenged the county to believe in "the better angels of their nature" and live up to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.

-By Robin Lind

(Excerpts from the remarks of Society President Robin Lind, introducing the speakers at the historic marker unveiling)

On behalf of our members, and the members of the Goochland Branch of the NAACP and of the Rotary Club of Goochland, I welcome you all to this ceremonial unveiling of the county's newest historic marker; a marker which honors 14 courageous Black students who helped change the course of Goochland's history 59 years ago. By participating in the Freedom of Choice Program, they ended segregation in Goochland schools.

We extend a special welcome to those of you who are students today. These 14 blazed a trail for you to follow, set an example for you to emulate, and demonstrated a resolute commitment to equality that glows more brightly every year.

In 1965, there had been no Black School Board member, no Black Supervisor, no Black Governor, no Black President, no Black Astronaut...the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had only two years earlier told America "I have a Dream." And yet these students and their parents, and their churches, and their communities, believed in a better Goochland that had not yet come to pass.

You will remember that Dr. King said that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." A half century later, our first Black Attorney General, Eric Holder, expanded on this truth: "The arc only bends towards Justice, because people pull it towards Justice. It doesn't happen on its own."

So today we honor these students and their families who reached out to the arc of the moral universe and, here in Goochland, in this building, pulled it towards Justice.

Video Available Online

To view local television reporter Jennifer Blake's brief video on the marker unveiling ceremony please visit WWBT "12 On Your Side" YouTube channel:

https://youtu.be/L_Q7QLMgWXE?si=NDAgPL8T5-Tvxl0V



WHAT'S IN A NAME: FIFE

There have been several explanations given over the years for the place name “Fife,” a community in western Goochland where the Hadensville-Fife Road and Old Columbia Road intersect. Most have some element of truth.

For example, *The Origins of Unusual Place-Names* states that it represents “the family name of the owners of land upon which the post office was built.” Others believe that it is named after the easternmost county in Scotland, between the Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay, in honor of a local minister who hailed from there. That

would be partially correct; Fife does have a connection to both Scotland and a minister, but it was named for the minister himself, whose surname was Fife.

James Fife, born near Edinburgh, Scotland in 1794, settled in Goochland in 1820. He was brought up in a religious and educated household. He said that on Sundays he and his father William, Bibles in hand, made three trips on foot into the city to attend church. William read the French Bible with ease and the son acquired a fondness for books

that he never lost. His father, a Presbyterian elder, was a spiritually-minded man, recognized by his community as a devout Christian. However, after studying the New Testament in an effort to resolve an issue in their church, both William and his son, along with their pastor and about one-half of the congregation left the Presbyterian Church and united with the Baptists. As a result of this change in affiliation, James got to know influential

Baptists like Robert and James Alexander Haldane; the brothers greatly influenced him through their writings, philanthropy, and preaching.

When James was around 18 years of age, he and his brother William came to America to join their brother Robert Beverly and to receive their part of the estate of a wealthy uncle. Robert married and settled in Fredericksburg, William settled in Gloucester, and James moved to Richmond where he held the position of city engineer. Before leaving Scotland, he had preached in the villages around Edinburgh and probably before 1820 when he moved to Goochland, he was actively engaged in the work of the ministry in this country.

With his residence in Goochland County, James began the life of a typical Virginia country pastor, to which he was to give his best affections, untiring efforts, and a large number of years. The place he lived was named Fife’s, no doubt after him, and from there he ministered to four Baptist churches: Lickinghole, Perkins, South Anna, and Williams. From none of these churches did he ever receive much material compensation. He might have fared better, for while he was living in Goochland, several town churches, including a church in Petersburg, sought to recruit him. However, he stayed put, living in comfortable circumstances and donating to missions. Around 1824, he married a Miss Miller of Goochland. Following her death and that of their two children, he re-married this time to Mrs. Margaret W. Minor, the daughter of Rev. Jacob W. Herndon, of Spottsylvania County.

Not only was James interested in serving his own congregations, but also in growing the overall strength and influence of the Baptist Church. Since 1800 the only general organization bringing all the Baptists in the state together was the General Committee of Correspondence, but by 1822, it was obvious that body had lost its grip. At its meeting in Charlottesville that year, only one layman and two ministers—Edward Baptist of Powhatan and James Fife were present. As the two ministers rode back toward Goochland following the meeting, they reviewed the situation and decided to attempt the organization of a general association among Virginia Baptists for missionary and educational work. With this objective in mind, they called a meeting for the next year (1823) in Richmond. Fifteen delegates attended and the Baptist General Association of Virginia was formed. Both Baptist and Fife preached at the meeting. One of those



attending said Fife's sermon was the most impressive, "producing a deep impression on his hearers, as was evinced by their tears."

James Fife was preeminently successful as a preacher in protracted meetings and was recognized as having special gifts for evangelism. In his childhood he had committed a large part of the Bible to memory and was able to give the chapter and verse for almost every quotation from the New Testament. Though he never had a college education, still he was fond of books, and made use of them in his preparation for the pulpit. On one occasion in Goochland, the whole congregation was much stirred by his sermon and one sister shouted aloud, whereupon he paused and said he would stop for five minutes, to allow all who wanted to shout to do so.

He was not a sensational preacher; instead, it is said that he orated with unction—an approach that evidently was quite successful. To a friend who asked how many persons he had baptized, he replied, "I do not know; I have kept no record." The friend then asked if the number would reach a thousand. "Oh, yes" Fife replied, "a great many more; there were five hundred one year."

Like many of the Baptist preachers of his day, James Fife was in the habit of making long preaching tours from county to county, a prime objective being to secure subscribers for the Baptist General Association of Virginia's newspaper the *Religious Herald*. He preached not only on Sunday, but any day and every day if possible. Sometimes he preached two or three times a day. Each time he stood in the pulpit, he made appeals for subscriptions to the *Religious Herald*. In a letter to his wife he records with evident satisfaction "At Ware's had a very large congregation and much shouting. Obtained eighteen subscribers to the *Herald*, being the largest number I ever obtained in one day." The newspaper he helped to start in 1828 remained popular for almost two centuries, ceasing publication only in 2014.

He suffered from dyspepsia, so his travels helped him physically as he was in the open air and horseback riding allowed him gentle exercise. At one point he considered moving to Missouri and traveled there for that reason. However, in 1840 he left Goochland to settle in Charlottesville, securing a commodious home known as "Oak Lawn" in the suburbs of the town where he spent the remainder of his days.

He continued an active pastorate up until a short time before his death, serving a number of churches within about a 20-mile radius. He was always a farmer,



The last Fife Post Office was located in Haden's Store.

loved husbandry, and often wrote for agricultural papers. It is reported that he enjoyed walking, sometimes as much as four miles before breakfast. At the age of 75 he would often walk the mile into Charlottesville two or three times a day. When he was too old to continue preaching, he still enjoyed his books, especially history books, reading them himself or having his wife read to him.

James Fife died in October 1876 at the age of 82. His legacy in Goochland is the community named for him: Fife.

While the community and post office (established in 1827) were originally called Fife's; in 1893 the name of the post office was changed to Fife. However, the post office has now been closed. Today, the sign designating the community reads Fife. Over the years, it has also been known as Fifes and Fifesville.

-By Christina J. Dunn

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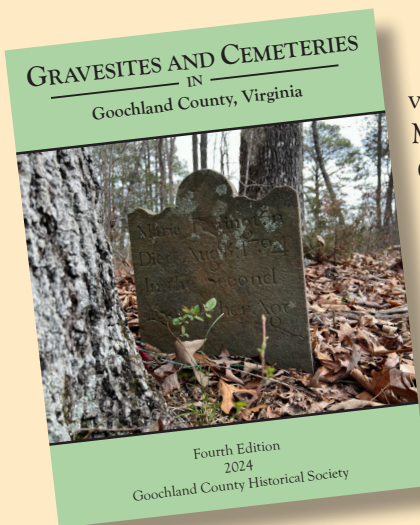


Goochland County Historical Society

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New Edition of Cemetery Book Is Coming Soon!



Not long after the Goochland County Historical Society was established in 1968, volunteers began working to record those individuals known to be buried in the county. Maintaining and building on this initial list continues. The first publication *Gravesites and Cemeteries of Goochland County, Virginia* appeared in 1990, and was updated in 2013 and again in 2019. With the discovery of 484 new entries since 2019 and with the supply of the 2019 edition sold out, the GCHS decided it was time for a new—4th—edition. This new edition will contain the new names, as well as nine new family cemeteries; these additions bring the total number of names to around 9,600 and the total number of cemeteries and gravesites to 370. GCHS Vice-President Richard Toler is overseeing the development of the guide. Publication is scheduled for spring 2024, possibly as early as April.

In addition to the print publication, the GCHS maintains a database of individuals with Goochland connections who are buried outside the county and another listing of people reported to be buried within the county, but whose death certificates do not specify the cemetery, only a general area of the county, such as Irwin or Crozier. We are always on the lookout for as yet undiscovered names and cemeteries/gravesites. If you have a cemetery on your property or know of one elsewhere, please notify the GCHS, so we can document its location.

Over the years, the various editions of *Gravesites and Cemeteries of Goochland County, Virginia* have been consistent best sellers in the GCHS gift shop. If you wish to reserve a copy of the new 2024 (4th) edition, please contact the society.