

Linda Beatty -GFWC Virginia Historian – 2024-26 – Tidewater District

(Tidbits of information gleaned from annual reports, Virginia Clubwoman Magazines at GFWC Virginia Headquarters and 50th & 100th Anniversary books.)

Last but not least - and I did plan this one correctly - we have Tidewater District – the home of our current & 58th state president, Susie Mowry. Counting Susie, Tidewater has provided the most state presidents – TEN in all AND like Northern, one of three districts who can boast of having one of its members become our International President, Dorothea Buck. She also had a fellowship named for her. Did you know that in the administration 2 terms prior to her becoming International President, she was nominated for 2nd Vice President, and there was a tie, so a run-off election had to be held and she was declared the winner.

This district has 18 Women's Clubs, 2 Junior Women's Clubs & **GFWC Peninsula Juniores** with a total of 713 members. Sadly, the **GFWC Peninsula Juniores** have reported only one dues-paying member since 2024, but hopefully more young women will join that club. In 2023 the **GFWC Tidewater Past District Presidents Club** was chartered. Did you know there used to be a club in Tidewater named the Alice Kyle WC in Portsmouth?

When Mrs. Henry Parker, a charter member of **WC of Newport News** was state president the number of districts increased to 3 and an endowment fund was established to benefit clubs in the future. As president, she created a form which clubs were to use for inclusion in the state federation's yearbook. Ladies that was when the 1st report form was required. Blame Tidewater when you are filling out the forms. During the 1952-54 administration this club boasted of having over 400 members and in the words of their president "all of whom were deemed to be active in some way in their club and community activities." At headquarters in Richmond there is a lovely silver punch bowl and cups donated in honor of Paula Cutler who served as state president 1988-90, given by the **WC of Newport News**.

In 1933 the practice of having the state president and Junior Chairman visit each district began, Tidewater District was the first to be visited and the **WC of Eastern Shore** hosted the officers for that visit providing their club members the opportunity to meet them since this club's location often prevents their members from attending state & district meetings.

The **WC of Accomack County** in the 50's revitalized their Garden Dept which had ceased to work due to the war. They held a very successful flower show.

In 1943 **The WC of Newport News** reported being a "club without a home" due to the war efforts when the port authorities approached the club requesting the use of their clubhouse for an officer's club and home for nurses for the duration of the war.

More recently The **JWC of Newport News** proudly hosted a drive to collect books for elementary and middle school kids and received over 1,000 volumes. This club had a recipe in the 1969 "Federated Women's Club Cookbook of 2000 Favorite Desserts"

It was for Flash Frosting. In 1977 this club partnered with **The WC of Newport News** on the Santa House Project which was open for 9 days in December. Approximately 2,500 attendees Parents

brought children and schools sent groups to see a show, shop for \$1 gifts, see Santa, help decorate his tree, visit his bedroom and see Mrs. Santa's kitchen.

In the history book for our 100th anniversary, Mrs. Millie Brown notes that in 1936 the words to the Federation Song were written by Maude Nichols of the Eastern Shore. Curiously, in the 50th anniversary history book the song is credited to Mrs NUCHOLS, a typo I am sure.

During Millie Brown's tenure 1972-74 the practice of holding district caucuses was begun and continues until today - better known as district parties. And in 1938 the first Clubwoman Magazine was published with the editor being from the **JWC of Hilton Village**.

In 1952 **the WC of Phoebus** reported that for 35 years their club had taken care of ALL welfare work in their town.

During that same time period the **WC of Hampton** had the unique problem of having to hire an architect to **enlarge** their clubhouse due to increased attendance of their members to meetings.

The WC of Hilton Village sponsored a once-a-week Golden Age Club in their clubhouse for men and women over 65 to meet and greet and have a program and refreshments. It was deemed to be the most far-reaching and beneficial project the club had ever done.

At that same time the **JWC of Hilton Village** undertook an effort to establish a recreation center in the Warwick area. They partnered with other civic clubs with plans to do their share of raising the \$125,000 needed to get it up and running for both the young and the old.

In 1977 the **Cape Henry WC** worked with the Dept of Conservation & Economic Development when members volunteered at the Center of Leisure Activities for older adults enrolled at a geriatric day care center.

Sounds like Tidewater clubs could have started Match.Com for all ages.

In the 50s **The Great Bridge WC** purchased & donated to the Chesapeake General Hospital an electric razor and watch to assist with patient care. Club members donated other toiletry items not provided by the hospital.

In 1987 **The WC of Hampton Roads** was a brand-new club but they jumped right in and started collecting coupons and food items to donate to the Battered Women's Shelter – a predecessor to our current Domestic Violence Signature project.

The **WC of Norfolk** presented a mock trial of the Juvenile Court with many well-known locals participating including a former congressman who acted as the Judge.

The **WC of South Norfolk** catalogued 826 books in their new library.

The **WC of Tidewater** chose to honor one of their members who had lost a child in 1994 by donating a plaque for the Love Wall at Camp Easter Seal East where the child had attended as a camper.

The **WC of Seaford** fulfilled a request by foreign students from 13 countries who were enrolled at William & Mary to “see how American people live”. They hosted a picnic and spread out the 45 students in different homes to spend the night and go to church on Sunday. A huge success. Today, however, we might have been reluctant to house a student if they came from some countries in the middle East.

The **Yorktown WC** celebrated their 60th in 2008. And, the year before they met the state’s membership goal of “5 more would be heaven in 2007”. By the way, their club flower is the Yorktown Onion. In 1953 they established the Yorktown Library and provided volunteers to paint, build shelves, make curtains and slipcovers as well as stock the shelves with book donations which totaled 1,000 volumes including books from other organizations.

Poquoson WC chartered in 1938 and went right to work in Civic Engagement. By 1948 they began the sponsorship of Yorktown County Community Council with the objective of eliminating duplication of services to those having welfare needs and to keep the public informed of conditions in general. Today their mission is “Empowering Women in Poquoson” and they have a beautiful club house there.

The Williamsburg Young Woman’s Club chartered in 1948 but in 1954 became the **Woman’s Club of Williamsburg**. In the 50s they adopted a long-range project of establishing a Community Center. That same year they hosted the 6th District Conference in October. In 2021 they awarded \$8,750 in scholarships to local high school graduates, and they are still going strong with a membership of 45.

The **Northampton WC** celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2008 and remarked that that “when 2058 rolls around” they hoped their club would still be active to celebrate their 100th year of being an example to their community. You go girls – only 32 years to go. In 1977 this club maintained the Northampton Community Center which was used not only for their club but also for other organizations during the year that brought in the public and kept them informed.

Thus, ends this chairman’s report for this meeting and this administration. It has been my pleasure to serve as Historian, and I am excited that the hours I spent in research will be available online for everyone to read, especially those who don’t attend conferences and conventions. So, in the immortal words of President Susie...Now What???