KINGSTREE FOUNDERS DAY
4:00 PM February 23, 2020
The County Recreation Center, 2084 Thurgood Marshall Hwy

THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPACT OF SLAVES IN THE FOUNDING AND PROGRESS OF KINGSTREE
SOCIAL HOUR — 4:00—4:30 PM

INVOCATION

WELCOME — Ken Kellahan
Williamsburgh Historical Society Board

Founders Day— What it is — Wendell Voiselle Director
Williamsburgh Historical Museum

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER — BILLY JENKINSON
Board Secretary, Williamsburgh Historical Society

“Honoring enslaved Ancestors, National, State and Local”
JOSEPH MCGILL

Closing Remarks — Cassandra Williams Rush

The Society welcomes and seeks donations of African American artifacts, family histories, pictures, etc. for display in the Williamsburgh Historical Museum Annex African American Section.
HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT WILLIAMSBURGH TOWNSHIP AND KINGSTREE
PLUS AFRICAN AMERICAN FIRSTS IN WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY

* In 1730 King George instructed Governor Robert Johnson of South Carolina to “mark out and set apart eleven townships in our said province, on the banks of rivers at sixty miles distance from Charleston. One of these was Williamsburgh which later became Kingstree. It was also one of the most successful townships.

* There were some pioneers already living in the area known as The Kings Tree, but it was not until 1732 Roger Gordon brought a colony of 40 Scotch Irish that any significant numbers of people settled in the area, John Witherspoon followed in 1734 with another group of Scotch Irish settlers including much of his family to settle in the area of The Kings Tree.

* Thorntree House was built in 1749 and much of the work would have been done by slaves held by James Witherspoon.

* “The first African slave in the Township was a black fellow” named Dick, imported by Roger Gordon in 1736.

* In the 1850 Census it is interesting to note that of the 717 households, 387 held slaves it also listed 18 “Colored” males and 19 “Colored” females for a total of 37. These are presumed to be “free” people of color in Williamsburg.

* In 1868 Williamsburg County citizens elected S.A. Swails as Senator, F.H. Frost, J.Pendergrass, and Fortune Guilds as Representatives in the Statehouse for Williamsburg. All were black. Mr. Swails remained in the Senate for several years rising to the level of President pro tempore in 1872 which was one step away from being Governor. There is a Historic Marker noting the location of his home in Kingstree on Main Street.

* In 1923 Professor William Milton Anderson Sr. moved to Kingstree after graduating from Benedict College. He became the first principal of Thomlinson School to hold a college degree. He was also an early educator in the Kingstree area to have a school named for him—W.M. Anderson Elementary School.

* Samuel David Chandler became the first black Dentist in Kingstree and his Wife Louvenia Williams Chandler was the first African American woman to be named as home supervisor of the Farmers’ Home Administration.

* Matthew Gardner was the first African American elected to Town Council and served as Mayor Pro Tem of Kingstree Council for 21 years.

* Martin Luther King visited Kingstree in 1966 and delivered his “March on the Ballot Box” speech. There is a Historical Marker at the old Tomlinson School where the event took place.

* In 1973 Benjamin James Gordon Jr. became the first African American Representative from Williamsburg County to the South Carolina General Assembly since Reconstruction.

* In 1973 a ceremony was held to change the name of Williamsburg County Training School to C.E. Murray High School. In doing so Dr. Murray became the first and only active principal to have his school named for him.

* Glen Kennedy was the first C.E. Murray graduate to become principal of that high school.

* Alex Chatman became Williamsburg County’s first African-American supervisor, and Tiffany Wright became the first African American woman to become supervisor in Williamsburg County and the state of South Carolina.

* Ronnie Saab was the first African American elected as Senator from Williamsburg County since Reconstruction and was also a graduate of C.E. Murray.

* Pearl Brown became the first African American Treasurer in the state of South Carolina.

* Delores Williams became the first black Municipal Court Judge in Hemingway in the year 2002.
Biographical Sketch

(Joseph McGill, Jr.)

Mr. Joseph McGill, Jr. is a history consultant for Magnolia Plantation in Charleston, SC and the founder of The Slave Dwelling Project, Inc. Sleeping in extant slave dwellings, this project has brought much needed attention to these often neglected structures that are vitally important to the American built environment.

Prior to his current position, Mr. McGill was a field officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation working to revitalize the Sweet Auburn commercial district in Atlanta, GA and to develop a management plan for Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area.

Mr. McGill served as the Executive Director of the African American Museum located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His responsibilities included seeking funds from grant making entities to support the capital and operating budget of the museum/cultural center and developing programs that interpret the history of African Americans.

Mr. McGill is the former Director of History and Culture at Penn Center, St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Penn School was the first school built during the Civil War for the education of recently freed slaves. As Director he was responsible for the overall development and implementation of the Center’s program for collecting, preserving, and making public the history of Penn Center and the Sea Island African American history and culture.

Mr. McGill was also employed by the National Park Service, serving as a Park Ranger at Fort Sumter National Monument in Charleston, South Carolina. As a Park Ranger, Mr. McGill was responsible for giving oral presentations on Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie on and off site. He was also responsible for supervising volunteers and participating in living history presentations.

Mr. McGill is the founder of Company “I” 54th Massachusetts Reenactment Regiment in Charleston, South Carolina. The 54th Massachusetts Volunteer In-
fantry was the regiment portrayed in the award winning movie “Glory”. As a Civil War Reenactor, Mr. McGill participates in parades, living history presentations, lectures, and battle reenactments.

Mr. McGill appears in the book *Confederates in the Attic* by Tony Horwitz. He is also a member of the South Carolina Humanities Council Speakers Bureau.

Mr. McGill is a native of Kingstree, South Carolina. He is a graduate of Kingstree Senior High School. Upon graduating from High School he enlisted into the United States Air Force. While in the Air Force, Mr. McGill served as Security Police-man in England, Washington State and Germany.

Mr. McGill also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Professional English from South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

He is married to the former Vilarin Mozee and they have one daughter, Jocelyn Mozee McGill.

Slave quarters on Mansfield Plantation
WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The mission of the Williamsburgh Historical Society is to preserve, protect, and present the history of Williamsburg County and of South Carolina. The current Museum expansion now underway will provide much needed space to include information and displays of pictures, artifacts, and stories about the history of African Americans and of the fight for Civil Rights. If we are to succeed in this mission, we need your help!

A museum is an experience to be seen as well as heard, and it needs to be presented in a way that is interesting and memorable to visitors. That is why the Society is asking for PICTURES, ARTIFACTS, FAMILY HISTORIES AND STORIES about the African American Experience in Williamsburg County.

We have a good start already, but more is needed. As you enjoy the event this evening, please think about donations you may have or some you may know about. Spread the word and encourage others to call or visit the museum.

Thank you for your help in this important and worthy project!

Wendell Voiselle
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KINGSTREE FOUNDERS DAY IS PRESENTED BY
THE WILLIAMSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SPONSORED BY:
WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY COUNCIL
THE WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM BOARD

JOSEPH MCGILL is sponsored by South Carolina Humanities, a not for profit organization; inspiring, engaging and enriching South Carolinans with programs on literature, history, culture and heritage.

FOUNDERS DAY COMMITTEE:
Sulondia Hammond, Beth Horton, Billy Jenkinson, LaTonya Parker, Cassandra Williams Rush, Jennifer Sabb, Wendell Voiselle, Lynn Wilson,