

Downtown South Boston

VIRGINIA

Fire Hydrant



Walking Tour



1. Ida Rogers Vaughan

Painted by Chawn Cliborne-Bego

2. Dr. Henry Grant Wood

Painted by Karen Robertson

3. Captain Edwin Jeffress

Painted by Nelly Zamora Jones

4. Carroll Headspeth

Painted by Kay Lewis

5. William Sutphin

Painted by Catherine Womack

6. E. Nash Hardy

Painted by Karen Robertson

7. Wiley Waddill Ward

Painted by Kay Lewis

8. William A. Kent

Painted by Ron Miller

9. Lowell Strickland

Painted by Rebecca Rodgers

10. William Munford Tuck

Painted by Kay Lewis

11. John Hamilton

Painted by Susi Robbins

12. Dr. J. M. Mason

Painted by students at Carlbrook School

13. General Nathanael Greene

Painted by students at Carlbrook School

14. The Tobacco Man

Painted by Veronna Barksdale

15. Dr. Alexander Trent Clarke

Painted by Betty Caldwell

16. Dr. Nathaniel Green Terry

Painted by Margaret Covington

17. Dollye Kent Ragland

Painted by Kay Lewis



1. Ida Rogers Vaughan had a passion for having a library in South Boston. In 1915 she began in a room above the Planters & Merchants Bank on Main Street, moved to a room above Wilborn hardware, to one over Reeves Drug Store, and later to one above Boston Bakery. Residents donated books to her cause. It was not until The Carrington Memorial Library opened in 1935, that her dream of a permanent home for a library was realized.

2. Dr. Henry Grant Wood

was the first black physician in South Boston. Wood was a graduate of Shaw University Medical School in Raleigh, North Carolina, around 1900. He married Sallye Davenport and they moved to South Boston joining the Ebenezer C. M. E. Church. Having no children they opened their home to foster children. In 1912 the Williams Normal and Industrial School was opened under the direction of Ebenezer Church and Sallye Wood was the first principal. The school was referred to by many as "Mrs. Wood's School." Wood and his wife lived on North Main Street in South Boston. They are buried in Rose Garden cemetery in South Boston.



3. Captain Edwin Jeffress

applied for a post office to be established in the new town upon its incorporation by the General Assembly in 1884. Jeffress died at the age of 68 in 1891. He came to South Boston with the completion of the Richmond and Danville Railroad in 1855 and was for a long time its only merchant. Today Jeffress is known as the "Father of South Boston." His home "Forest Oaks" is now home for American Legion Post 8.



4. Carroll Headspeth was the historian and author for South Boston. He kept the history alive about Greene's Crossing of the Dan. Had it not been for his diligence there would not be the two exhibits today honoring this event. He coauthored The Retreat to the Dan with Spurgeon Compton. In addition Headspeth authored The Battle of Staunton River Bridge and Halifax Volunteers in the Confederate Army.



5. William Sutphin enlisted in the U. S. Army in 1885 and was mustered in at Fort Douglas, Utah, where he was assigned to company C of the 24th Infantry. The company traveled by wagon to Fort Huachuca, Arizona Territory, to participate in the Indian wars. He participated in the Indian wars in the Arizona Territory. Later he worked for Barbour Buggy Company and then became a blacksmith. In 1965 he was honored on local TV as being one of eleven known living Indian war veterans in the United

States. Sutphin, a native of Pittsylvania County, moved to Halifax County following the completion of his tour in the army. Sutphin died in 1966 and is buried in Rose Lawn cemetery in South Boston.

6. E. Nash Hardy

was born in 1848 and was an active member of First Baptist Church on Main Street (Nash Bible Class is named in his honor). He served on the South Boston Town Council, was town clerk, treasurer, and a sergeant for the South Boston Police for about ten years. Hardy was a member of Company E, 12th Tennessee Cavalry, Confederate Army earning the rank of Captain. He served as the adjutant of the Halifax County Camp of Confederate Veterans in South Boston from its organization until his death in 1920. Hardy organized the fire department in 1884 with the title of Captain. He remained in charge of the department until 1906.



7. Wiley Waddill Ward

was the first mayor of South Boston. He served in the Civil War as a Lieutenant in Co. 1, 4th Virginia Infantry Regiment. After settling in South Boston he was one of the seven original town council members and was elected Mayor at its first meeting in February of 1884. Ward was also one of the founders of the Times newspaper in 1890. He served as editor for nine years after the name changed to the Halifax Gazette. From 1914 until 1920 he served as the local



postmaster. History says that Ward was always cold and wore an overcoat year round.

8. William A. Kent was the first black official to be elected to the South Boston Town Council (1969). He served twenty-one years during which times he was Vice-Mayor (8 years) and Mayor (4 years) until his retirement in 1990. He served on numerous commissions and committees and was instrumental in the redevelopment of downtown South Boston. Kent was a native of the Sutherlin area and the only child of Benjamin and Edna Kent. He received his early education in Halifax County but graduated



at Mary Potter, a boarding school in Oxford, North Carolina, which was supported by the Presbyterian church. After a tour of duty in the U.S. Army he attended the Renouard Training School for Embalmers in New York. Kent returned to South Boston and worked with his uncle at People's Funeral Home which later became Kent Funeral Home.

9. Lowell Strickland, local businessman, in 1983 had a desire to have a local museum in the town. Strickland was known for collecting any and everything historical about the community. At his request a local woman's club, The Tuesday Woman's Club, agreed to manage and operate the museum. The museum is still in operation under the name of South Boston-Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History.



10. William Munford Tuck was born in 1886, on the family farm near Omega. He was the son of Robert James Tuck and Virginia Fitts Tuck and attended school at High Hill and Virgilina. He also attended Chatham Training School which would later become Hargrave Military Academy. His college days would be spent at William and Mary where he played football and won the state intercollegiate two-mile run in track. In 1917, he became a school principal in Northumberland County.

attended law school at Washington and Lee. Tuck represented our community for three terms in the Virginia Senate, as Lieutenant Governor, as Governor of Virginia, and as a Congressman in the House of Representatives. He was known to have never lost an election. Tuck spent his last years in his home on Jeffress Street.

11. John Hamilton was a contractor and builder. He, with his brothers Allen and Robert, were master builders in South Boston. All three had architectural training at St. Paul's College and Hampton Institute. John Hamilton helped James Traver in the building of the covered bridge over the Dan River in 1854. He helped build Planter & Merchants Bank in 1891, R. S. Barbour house on Main Street, the Noblin house on Washington Avenue and many more. He built his own house at the corner of North Main Street and Hamilton Street. Queen Anne in style, the



home had stained glass windows with geometrical features. It was demolished when Cavalier Boulevard was widened. In 1984 the town council renamed the street Hamilton Boulevard in honor of the Hamiltons.



12. Dr. J. M. Mason began his practice in the early 1900s. He, with the help of his wife Edna, a registered nurse, operated a black hospital in their home on North Main Street in South Boston. This was the first private hospital for the black community. Dr. Mason's home was the site where the Business and Professional Men's Club of Halifax County and South Boston was founded in 1931. He was the club's first president and served in that position for ten years.

13. General Nathanael Greene was the leader of the Southern army during the American Revolution when he and the Southern army would race with General Lord Cornwallis and the British army to the Dan River in South Boston. His strategic retreat has awarded him the title of the greatest strategist of the American Revolution. Today many historians are referring to him as "The Forgotten Hero of the American Revolution." Greene was born a Quaker in Rhode Island but would defy his Quaker faith to serve his country.



14. The Tobacco Man is representative of the many great tobacco pioneers in our community. For more than two centuries, beginning with the original settlers, tobacco represented the number one crop in the economy. During the 1930s and 1940s South Boston had the second largest bright leaf tobacco market in the country. From 1935 through 1941, it was the home of the National Tobacco Festivals. Tobacco farming is slowly disappearing.

15. Dr. Alexander Trent Clarke was the first physician to locate in South Boston. He came at the request of the community because there was no physician in the area. Born in 1845, Clarke came in 1874 and stayed for the remainder of his life and died in 1904. Clarke served in Company D, 3rd Virginia Cavalry and as a nurse in the hospital in Richmond during the Civil War. Following the



war, he attended medical school. Clarke served as the county's health officer for many years.



16. Nathaniel Green Terry was born in 1887 on a farm near Alton, Virginia, and married Mary Gentry from Roxboro, North Carolina. He joined the South Boston Police Department in 1905, and wore shield No.1. He later served as Police Chief for about twenty years and then as the first state trooper in the South Boston area. Two of his sons would also become policemen.

17. Dollye Kent Ragland was the major collector of black history in South Boston and the county. She is given much of the credit for the success of the local Junior Drum and Bugle Corps. She was quoted once saying to her students: "Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interest in your own planned career, however, humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortune of times; for life goes not backward, nor tarries with yesterday." Dollye Ragland was the wife of Dr. Leon V. Ragland.



**Downtown
South Boston**
VIRGINIA

**Fire Hydrant
Walking Tour**

We invite you to walk downtown and enjoy our fire hydrant project. Have fun looking at the whimsical and amusing public art as you learn a bit about some of South Boston's historical characters.

For those of you that would like to walk the tour for exercise, the total walking distance is 1.54 miles.

Thanks so much to the Halifax County Historical Society for their biographical research, to the Halifax County Service Authority and the Town of South Boston for their cooperation, to Images by Swanson Photography for their photos, to Virginia Main Street for their support, and to the artists and volunteers of our community for their great work and partnership!

For more information on events and activities in Downtown South Boston

Visit
www.downtownsobo.com

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