



CCHA Bulletin

February 2025

Caswell County Historical Association
THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE CCHA & THE RICHMOND-MILES MUSEUM

Six More Weeks of Winter? Check out this blog post from the Library of Congress



“Groundhog” is the common vernacular name of the ground squirrel formally known as *Marmota monax*. This animal also goes by other names; the terms “woodchuck,” “marmot,” “land beaver,” “whistler,” and even “whistle-pig” all refer to the same creature. Whatever the name, there’s a strong belief that this little burrowing mammal predicts the weather, and a specific connection to the second day of February. This Groundhog Day tradition is celebrated in many places in the United States and Canada, with an

emphasis on tongue-in-cheek humor and ceremonious proclamations. It is best known among people whose ancestors spoke German, especially the Pennsylvania Dutch. To read more click [**here**](#).

The Celebration of Black History Month - The Origin and History

from History.com

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro



Carter G. Woodson- original founder of the recognition of African American History in February. Above.

History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

Learn more *click here and also see a short video.*

Below- Thurgood Marshall first African American appointed to the US Supreme Court serving 1967-1991.



Caswell County African American Historical Figures

Robert Wiley a political leader in Caswell County

The First African American County Commissioner

by Sandra Aldridge
CCHA Writer and Researcher



Lucille Foster Wiley and Robert Victor Wiley.

On a recent Friday afternoon, Gaynelle Bigelow was interviewed about her father, Robert Victor Wiley. Mrs. Bigelow gave insight into the characteristics that made him such a great Father, family man, and community leader. Known to be a man of integrity and honesty. His stellar reputation earned him the respect of many country residents. All these attributes would propel him into becoming the first African American elected to public office in Caswell County.

Robert Victor Wiley was born in the Frogsboro Community in Caswell County on December 4, 1911. His parents were Robert D. Wiley and Luella Willis Wiley. The teacher at the first school that Mr. Wiley attended was his mother. He attended school in Person County up until the seventh grade. After his father's death in 1926, he left school to help the family. He would later graduate from Pleasant Grove High School in Alamance County, NC. While attending school he was active in FFA (Future Farmers of America) and won a district medal for judging livestock at a competition at A&T State University in Greensboro, NC.

In 1931, Mr. Wiley returned to farming in Caswell County. He married Lucille Foster on December 6, 1942, whom he had met at church. Early in their marriage they lived on family property. They purchased 107 acres in 1955 and built a home. They had four

children, Gaynelle, Robert, Leon, Carl, and Ronald. He and his wife would later foster ten children.

Mr. Wiley joined Blackwell Baptist Church, in Yanceyville, in 1923. He served as the first president of the choir. Mr. Wiley lived out his faith serving the church in various roles for over 60 years. He was the Superintendent of Sunday School for 47 years. He served as Chairman of the Board of Deacons for 45 years. He also served as President of the Cedar Grove Baptist Sunday School Convention for 12 years, secretary of the Ministers and Deacons Unions. He continued his service as Chairman of the Finance Committee for the Ministers and Deacons Union, and as the secretary of the Ministers and Deacons union.

Robert Wiley came to love and appreciate the rewards that came from “toiling the soil.” He was a man with strong work ethics, a man of integrity and honesty. His children worked beside him on the family farm. He taught them those same values. He was active in his children’s lives, but also in the lives of those in his community. He served as a 4-H Club leader for several years. Mr. Wiley hired youth to work on his farm. It was more than a job as he mentored them. Many of them affectionately called him “Chief.”

He served as President of the PTA at Jones Elementary School and Caswell County High School. He served on the Caswell County Planning Board, Social Services Board, and Governor Jim Hunt’s Youth Task Force.

In 1974, Robert Wiley announced that he would seek the Democratic nomination for a seat on the Caswell County Board of Commissioners. He would represent the Locust Hill and Stoney Creek District. He ran on a platform for better educational facilities, completion of the watershed project, and year-round recreational opportunities for children.

On June 4, 1974, Robert Victor Wiley made history by becoming the first African American elected to the Caswell County Board of Commissioners. In an interview with the Caswell Messenger, he stated” I had an urge to be part of the government to serve not only the Black people, but for all the people. After being elected, I was afraid there might be added pressure on me because I was the first Black elected official in modern day Caswell County. But the people excepted me as a commissioner and expected me to do my job well.

In his role as County Commissioner sought to bridge the gap that often exists between the commissioners and the people of the county. He strived to function as a liaison in helping local citizens to understand the function and the actions of the board. His efforts were rewarded as he served for 8 years. When asked to reflect on his terms, he felt he accomplished his goals with the board.

Mr. Robert Wiley was not just the “First.” He paved the way for other African America’s to serve as elected officials in Caswell County. Gaynelle Bigelow was how to define her father. She said that he man of great principles. He was unwavering in his stance on righteousness. He was a great friend and mentor to others. When asked to describe him in just one word, she said “he was a renaissance man.”

Mr. Wiley died on July 30, 2005. He is buried in the church cemetery at Blackwell Baptist Church.

A special thanks to Gaynelle Wiley Bigelow for her time spent with Sandra Aldridge in preparing this article.



Julious Earl Richmond a small business leader in Caswell County

by Sandra Aldridge
CCHA Writer and Researcher

Julious Earl Richmond was a resident of Milton. He was born on November 14, 1931, to Sidney and Henrietta Jeffries Richmond.

He was the 13th of fourteen children. He graduated from Caswell County Training School in 1950.

Mr. Richmond joined the US Army and achieved the rank of First Sergeant while serving in an artillery unit at Fort Hood Texas. He also attended barber school.

He returned to Milton and became a farmer and cattle rancher. He married Bettie Dean Lipscomb on February 14, 1953. Mr. Richmond served his neighbors and community by assisting them with clearing their fields. He also enjoyed helping with repairs, as he considered himself a “Master Jack” of all trades. In fact, one of his favorite phrases was “It’s for me to know and for you to find out.”

Mr. Richmond was also a man of great faith. From his youth his was a member of St. Andrews AME church until its closure by the Western District Conference. He became a member of River Zion Church, where his wife and daughter were members. Mr. Richmond served as an usher, a member of the of the Male Chorus, a deacon, and a church trustee. Also, he was a member of the Milton Missionary Circle. He lived out his faith in his community by his generosity of helping those in need.

Mr. Richmond was a licensed barber in North Carolina and Virginia. He was employed for several years at Palace Barber in Danville, NC. His brother, Morris operated a barber shop in Yanceyville until he died in 1972. Earl Richmond assumed management and renamed it Earl’s Barbershop. He worked there until ill health forced him to retire. He was a barber for 67 years.

While operating the family farm and the barbershop, he earned an Associate Degree in Business Administration from Piedmont Community College. He held memberships in the Caswell Voter League, the Caswell County Black Credit Union, and the Thomas Day/Union Tavern Museum.

Earl was a father figure to numerous people: Vicki Richmond-Moore, Jackie G. Waters, Barbara B. Stanley, Charlene Reid, Rita and Ashley Cobb, Elaine Mills-Tyson, Cynthia (Cimp) Lipscomb-Brown, Tori Waters, Tymesia Jones Smaw, Barry Richmond, Ray Richmond, Brad Perry, Chanel Mangum, Donald Lea, Jr. , and Keith Taylor.

Earl Richmond died on June 8, 2020. His legacy continues through his daughter, Vanessa “Twinkle” Richmond-Graves, and her husband Ray Lee Graves.

Refreshed CCHA Website

Check out our refreshed website by clicking [*here*](#) or the button below.

You may renew your membership, purchase books and see copies of the previous email Bulletins on the website. Also in the near future, we plan to launch a Member Portal

where members can access the previously published longform newsletters, The Lives & Times.
Stay tuned!

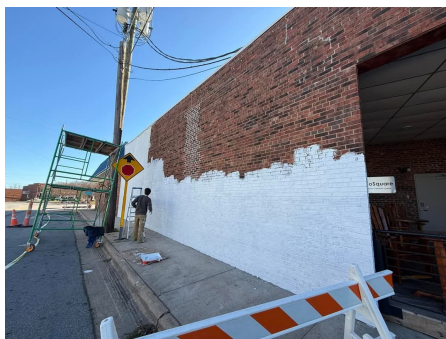


[Visit Refreshed Website](#)

Friendly reminder that the CCHA memberships are due.
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

[Renew Your Membership Here](#)

The Caswell Arts Council Mural Project



The project begins...



Who could it be?

The Caswell Arts Council received a grant to have a mural painted in Downtown Yanceyville on the CoSquare building on Main Street. The mural will include four prominent historical Caswell figures that were connected to Yanceyville - N.L. Dillard, Maud Gatewood, Neil Watlington and Henrietta Jeffries.

OTHER NEWS

We Need More Farmers

Work with other
farmers to lower
costs

Guaranteed
Markets

Help build the
local food
system

 **Piedmont Progressive
Farmers Cooperative**



Come to our meeting and learn more.

Tues, Feb 25, 7pm

Piedmont Community
College-Caswell Campus

331 Piedmont Dr.

Yanceyville, NC 27379
BLDG K ROOM 202/03

info@ppfcoop.com

If you have family or friends in the area,
please share this news as we need more
farmers to sell their eggs and produce to a
distributor that is needing more than the
group can currently provide.

[Visit our Website](#)

CASWELL COUNTY

FARMERS Market

Local Farm Grown Food | Handmade Crafts
Kid's Activities | Live Music | Food Trucks
Community Info | Food Pantry Donation Station
& MORE every week

Thursdays
APRIL 24 - SEPT 25
4:00 - 6:30

Yanceyville Pavilion
158 E. Church St.
Yanceyville, NC 27379



CaswellLocalFoods.org

Calling all area businesses...

Be a part of building a stronger community
as a Donation Station Sponsor!

FOOD & FUNDS *drive*

Sign up Today
\$100 week
\$500 month



Caswell County Farmers Market

April 24 - September 25

In 2025, the Caswell County Farmers Market operated by the Caswell County Local Foods Council (CCLFC), will include a Donation Station, a Cooperative Extension program that will assist both our farmers and the hungry here.

We are asking area businesses to support the community with \$100 weekly sponsorships to provide local produce/protein to be purchased from farmers and presented to the 'pantry of the week'. The pantries then distribute the food to those in need.

At this time, Caswell County has six groups that we know of that collect and distribute food to those in need. They are Caswell Parish, County Outreach Ministry, High Street Baptist Church, Locust Hill UMC, Pelham Community Center and Shady Grove UMC.

**PLEASE BECOME A SPONSOR, BE
RECOGNIZED & HELP THOSE IN NEED**

Click [HERE](#) to be a sponsor.



Learn About the Donation Stations at CaswellLocalFoods.org

[Click Here to Learn More About the Program \(scroll to bottom of page after clicking\)](#)

Caswell County Historical Association
THE OFFICIAL SITE OF THE CCHA & THE RICHMOND-MILES MUSEUM



**Membership
Drive
Now!**

See what is going on in the community
from a historical perspective.

All are welcome.

Annual Memberships - \$35

15 Main St., Yanceyville, NC
336-694- 4965

Caswell County Historical Association
336-694-4965

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