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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gloucester Museum Launches New Exhibit Featuring the Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School

The Gloucester Museum of History is launching a new exhibit featuring the Gloucester Agricultural and Industrial School (Gloucester A & I) on Friday, February 25, 2022. The exhibit, which will be available through 2023, will showcase the school's original 309-pound school bell cast in 1891 by McShane Bell Foundry. It will also include photographs and archival documents allowing guests to make connections with the hundreds of African American students who attended the school from 1888-1933.

Known locally as Cappahosic Academy, Gloucester A & I was established in 1888 by William Weaver with help from T.C. Walker, Reverend John Booth, and other community leaders in Gloucester. At this time, Virginia's public school system was segregated and educational opportunities for African Americans in Gloucester were few and far between. The success of Gloucester A & I helped pave the way for other local black institutions such as Woodville Rosenwald School and T.C. Walker's Gloucester Training School.

Modeled after Hampton Agricultural and Industrial Institute (now Hampton University), the school was purchased by the American Missionary Association in 1891. The school gained national attention when Frederick Douglass delivered the 1894 commencement address. Five years later, Hampton graduate William Gibbons Price was appointed principal. Price implemented twelve years of education and expanded course offerings to include scientific farming, college preparatory, and teacher training. He transformed the school by combining the educational philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois. The school's curriculum would become one of the most demanding in the state.

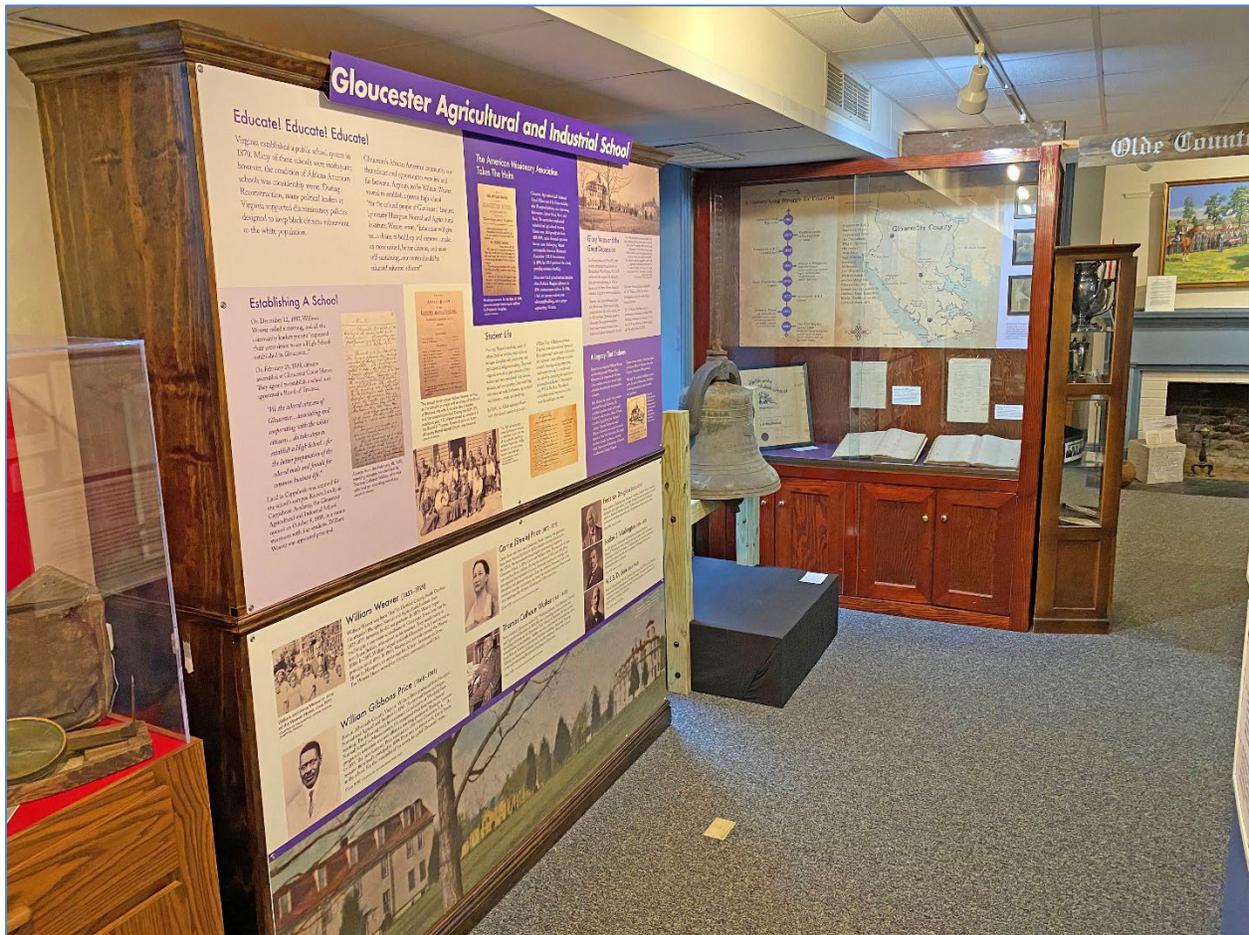
The school's main buildings, Richmond Hall, and Douglass Hall were impressive three-story structures that housed dormitories, classrooms, and dining rooms. They were the largest and most modern school buildings in Gloucester County during the early 20th century.

"The amazing history of this school is not very well-known, and we are honored to help tell its story and preserve its legacy," said Robert Kelly, Museums Coordinator.

Special objects on display include the school's bell, ledger books and documents from the 1900s showing school records and names of students, a 1926 diploma of graduate Nathaniel Thomas Jones, and 1920s photographs of students.

The Gloucester Museum of History partnered with the Woodville Rosenwald School Foundation, and local stakeholders and volunteers to produce the exhibit.

The Museum is located at 6539 Main Street and is open Mondays through Saturdays from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, contact Robert Kelly at 804-693-1234 or rkelly@gloucesterva.info.



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