BURWELL STRONG:
HOW A SMALL HISTORIC SITE REBUILT AFTER CATASTROPHIC THEFT BY AN EMPLOYEE
PART ONE: WHAT IS THE BURWELL SCHOOL HISTORIC SITE?

The Historic Hillsborough Commission – Established 1963
Burwell School Property - Purchased 1965
The Burwell School Historic Site – Opened to the Public 1977

Burwell Property c. 1965

Burwell Property c. 2019
The Burwells

Margaret Anna Burwell

Robert Armistead Burwell
Please note, BSHS has adopted the spelling Keckly as reflected in her early writings.
Part Two: Setting the Stage
2018
Elizabeth Keckly Bicentennial Task Force

Members of the Keckly Bicentennial Task Force and panelists from the Keckly Symposium
Keckly Exhibit
In February 2019, The Burwell School Historic Site presented a program on the work of the task force. Attendees included descendants of some of the people of color who lived and worked at the site.
Part Three: Cracks Begin to Show – Spring 2019

Event Overload – 11 Major Events in a Four Month Period
Toxic Workspace – Lack of Communication
Excerpts from a letter to the Commission from an employee outlining concerns – many of these concerns were previously unknown to the executive committee.
Review of Operations Revealed:

- **Long Standing Issues**
  - Identified but never resolved

- **Lost Organizational Capacity**
  - Financial Management
Commissioner Survey

**Assets**
- Site and site interpretation
- Research committee
- Dedicated volunteers

**Challenges**
- Lack of fundraising strategy
- Inadequate financial and administrative functioning
- Lack of coordination among committees
Crisis Response

Outside Bookkeeper  | Committee to Assist Director

Review Financial Documents

Meet with Director  | Dismiss Director

Authorities Involved

Theft of $174,000  | Charge of Class C Felony
Part Six: Moving Forward
July–December 2019

Greeters & Volunteers
Becoming Burwell Strong

More Active Board

• Motto “Burwell Strong” Adopted

Implementation of Strategic Plan

• Policies, Job Descriptions, financial management
PART SEVEN: ENTERING A NEW ERA
JANUARY 2020 TO PRESENT

Chair of Commission & Executive Director Alliance

Site Manager

Historical Coordinator
BURWELL STRONG

A view from our front porch

Staff & Speakers for a virtual program
Thank you!

Questions?

www.burwellschool.org