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CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

# 2021



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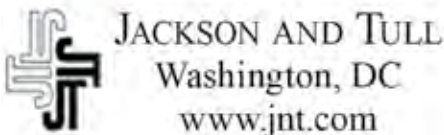
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## ON THE COVER

A photo of the Lancaster, one of the sidewheeler steamboats that made regular stops at wharfs on the Rappahannock from the 1890s throughout the 1920s. This photo, color enhanced by ECCA, shows the Lancaster enroute to Wellfords Wharf. ECCA research indicates that this photo may have been taken by Albert D. Warner, a local photographer who lived in Warsaw during the steamship era. It is provided through the courtesy of the Essex County Museum & Historical Society, the Richmond County Museum, and Jamie Smith from Sharps, Virginia.



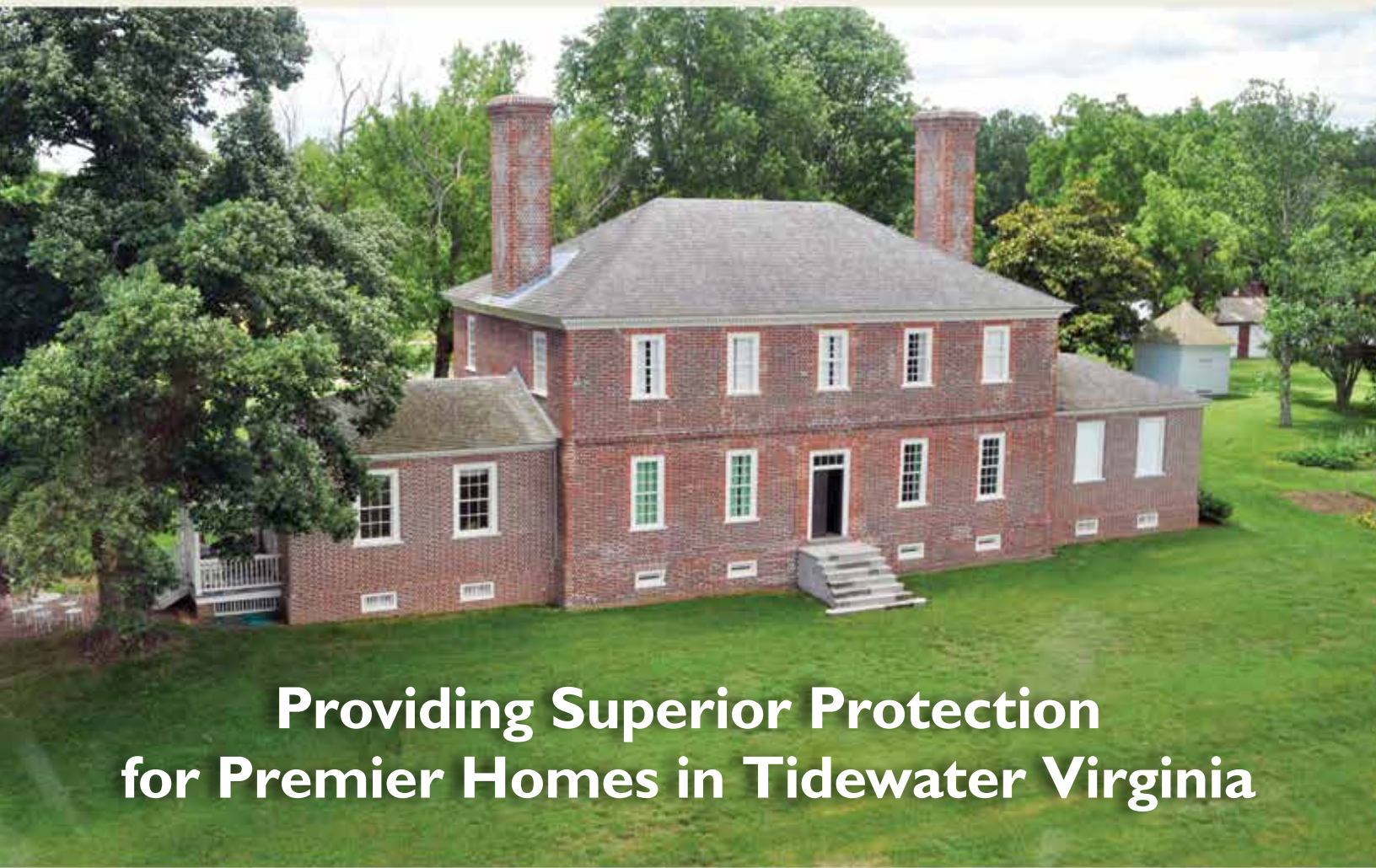
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# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH OPTIMISM

## ESSEX COUNTY CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and forced to conduct its activities through emails and zoom conferences for most of the past 15 months, the ECCA, nevertheless, achieved significant goals during this difficult period.

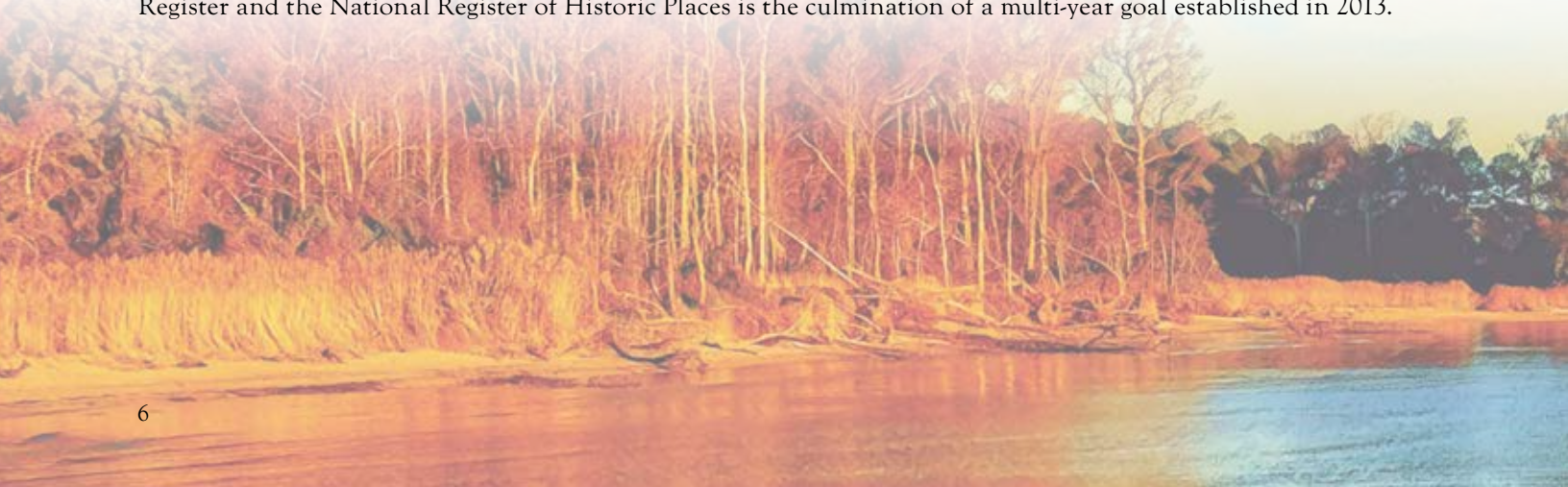
Hampered by COVID-19 restrictions and forced to conduct its activities through emails and zoom conferences for most of the past 15 months, the ECCA, nevertheless, achieved significant goals during this difficult period. While the impact of the COVID virus is not over, the development of effective vaccines and the national vaccination program currently underway throughout the United States gives us hope that, by year's end, our nation will be able to re-establish a high degree of social and commercial normality. We now look to the future with optimism that the worst part of the COVID health crisis is behind us. We also look back on the past year with pride that, in spite of the COVID restrictions, ECCA continued to pursue and successfully reached several priority goals established by its Board of Directors.

### **1. Lower Rappahannock Designated for Scenic River Status.**

On July 1, 2021, a 79-mile stretch of the lower Rappahannock, running from where the Route 3 bridge crosses the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg to the down-river boundaries of Essex and Richmond counties, was officially designated by the Commonwealth of Virginia as a State Scenic River. The goal of "scenic river" status for the lower Rappahannock was adopted by the ECCA at the initial meeting of its Board of Directors in early 2020. Shortly thereafter, Friends of Rappahannock and Scenic Virginia joined with ECCA in a collaborative partnership to pursue this objective. These three conservation partners pursued this goal throughout 2020 and were gratified to see it proposed as House Bill 1819 in January, 2021, by Delegate Joshua Cole, to Virginia's General Assembly. The goal became a reality when HB 1819 was passed by the House and Senate, and presented to Governor Northam who signed it on March 30, 2021. The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 2021. A more detailed description of the coordinated effort by ECCA, Friends of the Rappahannock, and Scenic Virginia to pursue the goal of Scenic River status for the lower Rappahannock is the subject of an article in this magazine by Hill Wellford. Hill and Hylah Boyd led ECCA's effort on this project.

### **2. Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District approved for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service.**

Designation of the Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places is the culmination of a multi-year goal established in 2013.





At that time, ECCA identified two geographical areas of Essex for potential designation as rural historic districts, the Millers Tavern District and the Occupacia District. The ECCA worked with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to survey historic buildings, structures, and sites in those areas which led to a determination of the geographical boundary in each district that would qualify for rural historic designation. The Millers Tavern Rural Historic District was completed first which resulted in its listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. Work on the Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District then proceeded, resulting in a boundary determination by DHR that encompasses 44,884 acres. The Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District was officially listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register on September 17, 2020, and on the National Register of Historic Places on November 30, 2020. Mac Garrett led the ECCA team members who worked on the Occupacia project.



Peter Bance



Hill Wellford

### 3. Historical Markers Commemorating Steamboat Wharfs to be erected by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources at Loretto and Chance.

Steamboat wharfs on the Rappahannock performed an essential commerce and social role for many years before the highway system was established and bridges were built that could accommodate other means of transportation. The opening of the Downing Bridge at Tappahannock in 1927 signaled an end to the steamboat era. In prior years, the river was the highway and wharfs at deep water locations served as locations for the shipment and arrival of goods and for passenger travel. The historical marker at Loretto will contain a brief history of the wharf at Wheatland which still exists, and the marker at Chance will feature the wharf at Layton's Landing which was destroyed many years ago. Sam Sturt, with assistance from the Essex County Museum and Historical Society, led the wharf project for the ECCA. The text of the two historical markers requires approval by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. We are hopeful that the historical markers will be erected in 2021.

We close this letter with a comment about the future of Essex County and Tappahannock. We have experienced a difficult year, but there is so much for which we should be thankful. As you review the articles that appear in this magazine, we hope you will appreciate and share our excitement and optimism about the future. Think about the assets of our county, its scenic and historic characteristics, its unspoiled environment and rural nature, the manner in which its citizens have responded to the COVID health crisis, and the community organizations that are working to address the needs of our citizens and to stimulate Essex's local economy.

Peter Bance, President

Hill Wellford, Vice President

Handwritten signatures of Peter Bance and Hill Wellford in black ink. Peter Bance's signature is on the left and Hill Wellford's is on the right.

# The Colonial Background of South Farnham Parish

Essex County, Virginia

Set Apart in 1683 from Old Farnham Parish

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From material collected for the *History of the Parish* for the Jamestown 350th Anniversary in 1957.  
By Joseph S. Ewing, Rector. The copy acknowledges *The Rappahannock Times*.

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There are two churches in South Farnham Parish, St. John's in Tappahannock which was built in 1849 and St. Paul's near Miller's Tavern which was built in 1838. They replaced the two colonial brick churches, Upper and Lower Piscataway, which were built before 1709. Old Rappahannock County was formed in 1656 from the upper part of Old Lancaster County and extended along both sides of the river. By 1662 Old Rappahannock County was divided into two parishes. The lower parish was named Farnham and the upper parish Sittingbourne. In 1683 that part of Old Farnham Parish on the south side of the river was set apart to form South Farnham Parish is now a part of Essex County, while that part on the north side was called North Farnham Parish and is not a part of Richmond County, in the Northern Neck.

The pioneers started to settle the Rappahannock Valley about 1650 and by 1652 they were organized as Lancaster County. That year the County Court in the name of the settlers called the Rev. Alexander Cooke from the James River to be their parson and to visit by boat at least six congregations in the upper and lower parts of the river. The only evidence left of Mr. Cooke's labors is the fact that by 1665 or soon after six church buildings had been built in the upper and lower parts of the river. Four of these churches were in Old Rappahannock County. The upper church in Old Sittingbourne was on the north side of the river near the site of what later became the colonial port of Leedstown and the lower church of that parish was built ten miles down the river on the south side below the mouth of Occupacia Creek. In Old Farnham Parish, the upper church was on the south side of the river near Piscataway Creek and the lower church was about ten miles down on the north side of the river near Farnham Creek. The planters on the opposite shore from their parish church had to cross the river to worship at this time.

Old Sittingbourne and Old Farnham Parishes secured the Rev. Francis Doughty to be their minister in 1655. He

was an interesting character having started his ministry near New York City. He lived on his plantation in the vicinity of Old Leedstown and visited the churches in his "good barque The Returne."

Four of the eight vestrymen of Farnham Parish were members of Old Piscataway Church which became the first church of South Farnham Parish. They were Lt. Col. Thomas Goodrich of "Pigeon Hill" who was the leader of the northern forces in Bacon's Rebellion; John Gregory, part of whose plantation became known as "Mt. Clement" and Croxton's Mill; Thomas Button, whose plantation is now "Windsor Hill" and Anthony North, whose plantation joined Button's. This church is first mentioned in local records in the will of Thomas Cooper written in 1675 when he requests that "he be buried with his wife in Piscataway Churchyard." Nathaniel Pendleton, a minister and a brother of Edmund Pendleton's grandfather, arrived in 1674 and preached in this church.

Thomas Gordon became the minister of Old Piscataway Church before 1672 and soon became involved in Bacon's Rebellion. He married the widow Button and lived at "Windsor Hill". When Governor Berkely



**St. John's Episcopal Church in Tappahannock is one of two churches established to replace the colonial buildings of South Farnham Parish that were lost during a lengthy period of confusion, impoverishment, legal entanglements and neglect that followed the Revolutionary War.**



**The cornerstone of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Miller's Tavern was laid on Saturday, August 4, 1838, at the northeast corner.**

returned to power, Gordon and his neighboring vestryman, Thomas Goodrich were ordered to appear before the County pardon. Thomas Goodrich kept his lands, but Thomas Gordon was no longer allowed to serve as minister in the colony. He and his wife sold "Windsor Hill" to Robert Tomlin and were heard of no more.

When Old Farnham Parish was divided in 1683, the Rev. Samuel Dudley was the minister of both Old Sittingbourne and Old Farnham. He continued to be the minister of the new South Farnham Parish with its Old Piscataway Church. He died two years later and Duell Pead, the popular minister of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex, added South Farnham Parish as a part of his work. However he went back to England in 1690.

The vestry of the new parish had to secure not only a glebe for the parson but also a second church. They decided to abandon the site of Old Piscataway Church near the river and in 1692 purchased land near Hoskins Creek close to where the King's Highway crosses it for their upper church. There, sometime before 1728, the stately colonial brick church described by Bishop Meaded was erected. The site can be seen on county road #671 about 4 miles west of Tappahannock. The site for the lower church was a part of the "Mary Gold" plantation of Nicholas Smith on the road between Ozeana and Upright. Here Lower Piscataway was built before 1706.

Since 1663 the planters down the county had been trying to establish a glebe on the river front near what became known as Glebe Landing. In 1699, a vestryman, Capt. Edward Thomas left the land upon which he was living to the parish for a glebe. This beautiful site was the first home of Parson Latane and was for over a hundred years a familiar land mark in possession of the parish. It is now the site of Markhaven Beach with a few bricks on the top of the hill to mark the place of the house.

Louis Latane, a French Huguenot minister and his family arrived in South Farnham Parish about 1701 to become its much loved and respected parson until his death in 1733. During his ministry the parish moved into its "golden age" and built the beautiful colonial churches and the brick glebe house. His education and character as well as his long life among the people of the parish and the ministry of the two parsons who followed him show conclusively that most of the colonial clergy served their parishes with honor and courage.

There is little left in the records about the Rev. Wm. Phillips who became the parson after Luis Latane until 1744. The Rev. Wm. Stuart became the minister of the parish from 1747-1749 when he left for St. Paul's King George County at the death of his father the Rev. David Stuart.

The coming of the merchants from Scotland to live in the parish seems to coincide with the coming of the Rev. Alexander Cruden from Aberdeen, Scotland to be the parson in 1752. He came from a scholarly family and was particularly close to the families of Dr. John Brockenbrough and Archibald Ritchie and was interested in the education of their children. He went back to Scotland in 1776.

Here and there the records give some of the names of the wardens and vestrymen during this period. It is well to preserve them for their descendants have been a part of the backbone of the nation as it spread across the continent. Hon. John Robinson, father of the Speaker, member of the Council and acting governor; Meriwether Smith, revolutionary leader and a U.S. congressman; William Johnson, John Waters, Anthony Smith, William Young, Edward Thomas, Edmund Pagett, William Covington, Francis Meriwether, James Fullerton, Robert Coleman, Francis Brown, Joseph Smith, Jonathan Fisher, Nicholas Smith, James Boughan, Thomas Sthreshly, William Roane, John Vass, Henry Robinson, Alexander



A marker notes the location of the South Farnham Parish Upper Piscataway site established in 1692.

Parker, James Reynolds, Abraham Montague, William Daingerfield, Francis Smith, William Tomlin, Daniel Dobyms, Henry Young, James Webb, John Clements, Thomas Waring, John Upshaw, Leonard Hill, James Mills, William Montague, Thomas Roane, Isaac Scandreth, Dr. Charles, Mortimer, Samuel Peachey, Archibald Ritchie, James Campbell, Newman Brockenbrough, John Edmundson, William Smith, John Beale and Joshua Fry.

The people could not get a minister during the American Revolution and the churches were closed until 1791. The convention met in 1785 to organize the Diocese of Virginia to which the parish sent Spencer Roane and Newman Brockenbrough as delegates. Dr. John Brockenbrough of Tappahannock secured a teacher from Scotland to come in 1791 to instruct his children and those of Archibald Ritchie. His name was Andrew Syme. When Bishop Madison, the first Bishop of Virginia, was visiting in Dr. Brockenbrough's home he convinced Mr. Syme that he should become an Episcopal minister. He was the first person to be ordained by a Bishop in Virginia and became the minister of South Farnham Parish. The people of all churches came to hear him. He went to Bristol Parish at the end of two years. The parish was without a minister for another twenty years. The final blow was struck in 1802 when the Virginia Assembly passed an act seizing the glebes, churches and other properties of the Episcopal Church.

But faith lives on in human hearts and minds not in temples built of stone. The tragedy of the Richmond theater fire, in which Gov. Geo. Wm. Smith, one of the sons of the parish, was killed, seemed to re-light the fire of faith. Monumental Church was built in Richmond

and Richard Channing Moore was elected the second bishop of Virginia and rector of the church.

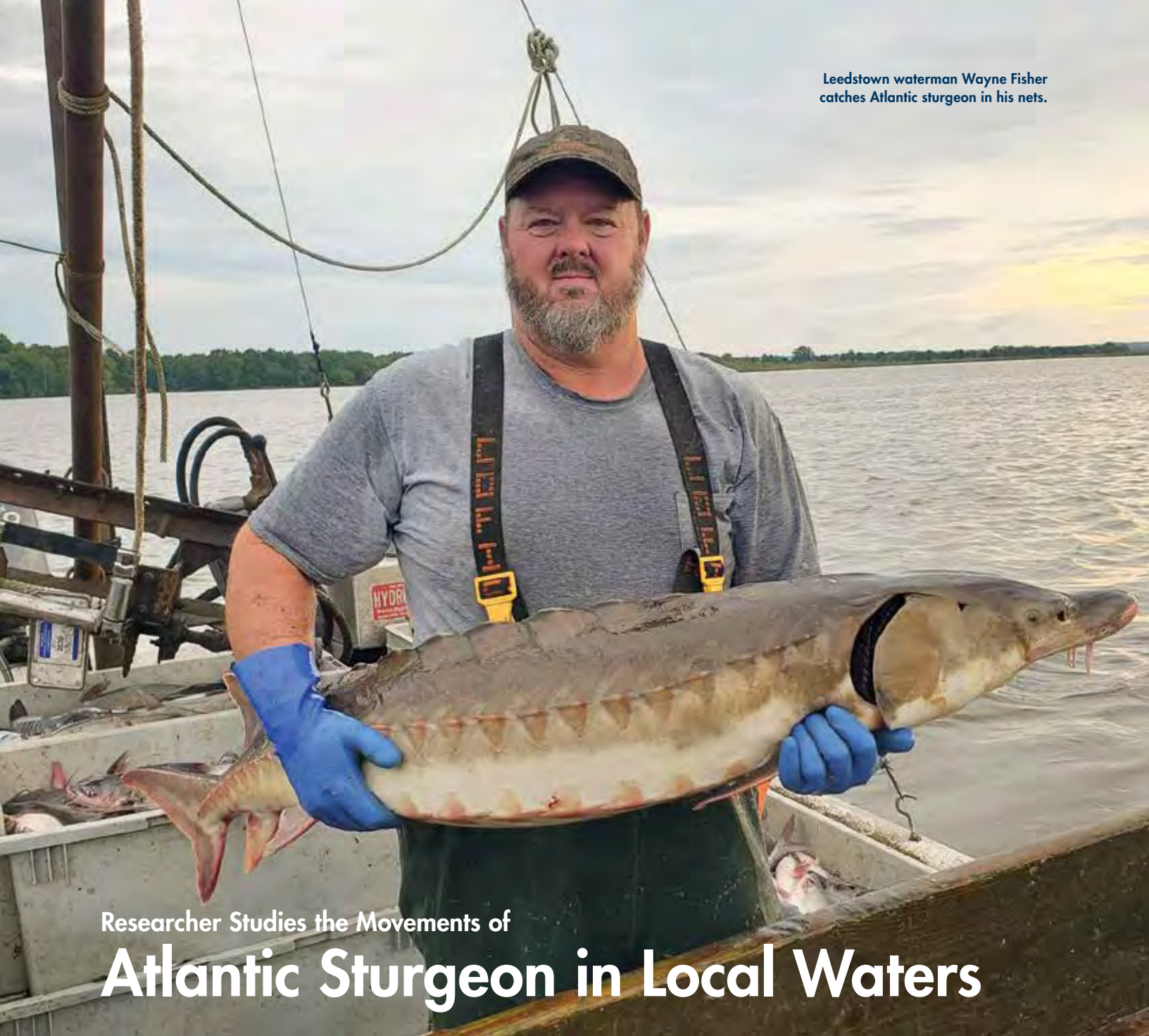
The people of South Farnham Parish gathered together in 1820 and elected a vestry and called a minister, the Rev. John Reynolds, a Wesleyan Methodist from England. The members of the vestry were John Daingerfield and George W. Banks. Wardens; Wm. B. Mathews, Secretary; Robert Weir, Lawrence Muse, Henry Young, John Belfield, Hubbard T. Minor and Dr. Austin Brockenbrough. They were to act as trustees for a Town Chapel to be used by all churches. Thomas M. Henley deeded them a lot to be used for this purpose at the head of Duke Street in Tappahannock. The church was finished in 1826 in Flemish Bond with colonial bricks and glazed headers such as are found in Vawter's Church. The building is now occupied by the Modern Cleaners.

The Rev. John Peyton McGuire, "the Apostle to the Rappahannock," succeeded Mr. Reynolds in 1826 as parson of the two parishes of St. Anne and South Farnham. During the 26 years of his ministry St. Paul's Church was built in 1828. The Town Chapel was outgrown and St. John's was built in 1828. The Town Chapel was outgrown as St. John's was built in 1849 at Tappahannock. When he left to become Headmaster of Episcopal High School the life of the parish had been restored and the Rev. H. W. L. Temple became its rector. Mr. McGuire came back to retire in Tappahannock after the Civil War and is buried with his second wife, Judith Brockenbrough, in St. John's churchyard.

The church buildings he left behind were new but the life of the church on Piscataway Creek goes back three hundred years.



Leedstown waterman Wayne Fisher catches Atlantic sturgeon in his nets.



## Researcher Studies the Movements of Atlantic Sturgeon in Local Waters

By John Page Williams

**D**r. Matt Balazik, who holds joint appointments with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) and the US Army Corps of Engineers, provided the following notes on his Atlantic sturgeon tagging studies in the Rappahannock 2015–2019, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) under the Endangered Species Act. The photos show Leedstown waterman Wayne Fisher with a male Atlantic sturgeon caught last year in his pound net between Beverley Marsh and Carters Wharf and quickly released alive. Wayne reports that in the late spring and fall seasons, such sturgeon are not uncommon catches in his nets.

### Rappahannock River - Fall 2015

Dr. Balazik and his crew made two exploratory sampling trips to the Rappahannock River in the fall of 2015, launching their skiff at Hicks Landing. Recreational boaters had reported adult sturgeon breaching in the Hicks Landing–Hopyard Bar area. They set their gill nets for two days, one just downstream of Hicks Landing and one just above Hopyard Bar. They captured one male sturgeon, which expelled milt during collection. They surgically implanted a telemetry tag to track the fish’s movements across the broad array of receivers deployed cooperatively by multiple research institutions throughout the Chesapeake and along the Atlantic coast. Dr. Balazik noted at the time that the presence of adults suggests that fall spawning occurs in the Rappahannock as it does in the James, the York (including the Pamunkey and Mattaponi), and the Nanticoke (including Marshyhope Creek).

### Rappahannock River - Fall 2016

VCU personnel made five sampling trips to the Rappahannock during the 2016 fall spawning run, setting their gill nets on September 19–21 and September 30–October 1 in several reaches between Camden (below Port Royal) and Hopyard Bar. To reduce the catch of large, ripe females, they deployed stretch mesh nets of only 25 cm to 32 cm instead of ones with larger mesh sizes. The nets never blocked more than half of the river channel’s width to ensure that some Atlantic sturgeon could pass without interference.

Operating on strict guidelines to protect fish health, the team chose not to sample on September 21, due to relatively low dissolved oxygen levels (5.3 mg/l) and high water temperatures (27°C/81°F). Even so, they caught seven male fish during this period and surgically placed

a ten-year VEMCO tag in each, following protocols permitted under their scientific and Endangered Species Act collecting permits. All seven fish expelled sperm, and six had spawning rubs on their underbellies.

VCU and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) receiver arrays provided telemetry data for the Rappahannock, showing when the tagged fish left the upper river. Other researchers’ receivers detected the fish offshore later. One of the seven males was a recapture that had been tagged originally by the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the mouth of the Rappahannock on December 13, 2007, when the fish was 85 cm (34”) in length. It had nearly doubled in length between captures. The male caught and tagged in the Rappahannock in 2015 pinged a receiver at the mouth of the river in early September 2016 but did not move up the river at that time. Currently, they do not know where the fish tagged in 2015 went during the 2016 fall spawn season. Adult males typically move upstream when the water temperature drops to approximately 28°C (82.5°F). This behavior is consistent with that of James River fish. Rappahannock males generally migrate out of the river when water temperatures drop to around 20°C (68°F), also similar to James River fish.

### Rappahannock River - Fall 2017

Dr. Balazik and his team significantly modified their Rappahannock sampling in the fall of 2017. They changed the sampling area to accommodate another research group working in the same area they had targeted the previous two years (from Camden to Hopyard Bar). They felt it better to avoid putting too much pressure on the spawning adults because they had (and still have) little information on the actual population size of the Rappahannock’s spawning fish. Thus, they decided to sample downstream for postspawn fish. In spite of expending three times the effort of previous years, they did not catch any adult sturgeon in the Rappahannock during 2017. This result was a surprise, since it had been relatively easy during the previous two years to catch adults, though they realized that they had significantly changed their sampling area. The catch failure may simply have resulted from a poor spawning run, but Dr. Balazik notes that they still have too little data to elucidate trends in the Rappahannock.

### Rappahannock River - Fall 2018

As was the case in the James, 2018’s warm water temperatures and heavy river flows hindered adult

Atlantic sturgeon live in rivers and coastal waters from Maine to Florida. Hatched in the freshwater of rivers, Atlantic sturgeon head out to sea as juveniles, and return to their birthplace to spawn, or lay eggs, when they reach adulthood.





**Atlantic sturgeon are slow-growing and late-maturing, and have been recorded to reach up to 14 feet in length and up to 60 years of age.**

sampling in the Rappahannock. The team could not start upstream sampling until mid-September due to high water temperatures. Those temperatures finally dropped, and they started sampling on September 12 in the Camden–Hopyard Landing area where they had had great success in 2015 and 2016. Despite heavy flow, they were able to get their net anchors to hold, but the nets themselves loaded up with fallen leaves and torn-out underwater grasses. They spent ten days sampling upstream and caught two adult males, both on September 14. They had thick milt running during processing and tagging.

They continued sampling upstream until October 11 and then moved downstream to Tappahannock in an attempt to catch sturgeon leaving the river. Colder temperatures allowed for longer gill net soak times. They had nets out almost around the clock from October 15 to October 21 but were unsuccessful, unfortunately.

In the process, they met several local people along the upper Rappahannock River who shared stories of adult sturgeon being caught in the deep holes at the base of the old Embrey Dam at Fredericksburg during the spring. These deep holes, of course, filled with silt when the dam went down in 2004. Some of these people also told of a few adult sturgeon caught in the 1970s and 1980s (which squares with stories Wayne Fisher heard from his father and the Oliff brothers, with whom they fished).

### **Rappahannock River - Fall 2019**

September temperatures were lower in the Rappahannock, allowing for two short sampling trips before work could start in the James. The team caught two adults in the Camden area. Both had spawning



runs, and the team implanted telemetry tags. They also detected three fish in the sampling area that had been captured at Hicks Landing in 2016 and 2018.

### **Rappahannock River - 2020–21**

COVID shut down Dr. Balazik's research opportunities on the Rappahannock, but Wayne Fisher and his family continued to cast their pound nets for blue catfish. In the process, he reports, "We caught some big sturgeon last year, including three in one day in October.



Anglers Josh Cohn and Conner Lynch snapped a photo of the shortnose sturgeon they caught in the Potomac River, keeping it in water to prevent harm.

Photo courtesy of Josh Cohn.

One weighed around 125 pounds” (see photo), so the fall spawning run continues. We’ll hope to hear more from both of these fishermen, scientific and commercial, in the fall of this year. Wayne also reports “a few small sturgeon this spring,” hopeful signs of young natives that are spending their first couple of years in their home river.

### Further Notes

Atlantic sturgeon researchers have been able to take small fin clips from their fish without causing harm, in order to analyze their genetic makeup. In a remarkable turn, the Nanticoke/Marshyhope fish seem to be more related to the York/Pamunkey/Mattaponi fish than to the stock in the James. When we asked Dr. Balazik about the Rappahannock, he replied, “We have very few genetics clips from there. As of right now, it seems that they mostly resemble the James River population and not the York and Marshyhope. Again, though, the current sample size is small, so it is difficult to fine-tune the population work yet.”

This year, Dr. Balazik would like to deploy a new tool that has the potential to assess the size of the stock more efficiently. It is a sophisticated side-scan sonar system, developed cooperatively with researchers at NOAA and Clemson University, for sampling multiple Atlantic

coastal rivers. It has shown great promise to date on the James and several South Carolina rivers. Unfortunately, he does not have funding for work specifically on the Rappahannock this year, and he has contracted obligations on the James that “have been piling up due to Covid-19 stuff.”

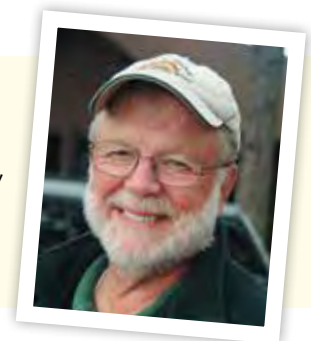
Thus the conclusions for the Rappahannock’s Atlantic sturgeon are tantalizing. Certainly, the fish are there and attempting to spawn, which is great news. ECCA will stay tuned for the time when the research team becomes able to give our river’s sturgeon the attention they deserve.

### Postscript

In a tantalizing incident on the Potomac, last spring, a couple of regular anglers out of Fletcher’s Boat House in Washington, DC, caught and expertly released an even rarer shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*) while jigging for other species. It was the first from the Potomac in many years. Studies have turned up more shortnose sturgeon in the upper Chesapeake Bay, including at least one tagged in the Chesapeake Bay but later relocated in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and the Delaware River, which has a stronger stock than any Chesapeake rivers.

On this catch, Dr. Balazik commented, “We’ve caught two shortnose in the James River. Genetics and telemetry data show both fish were from the Delaware. The gravid female we telemetered in February 2018 went through the Chesapeake/Delaware Canal a few months after being tagged and has been in the Delaware since. Neither of the two fish we caught in the James were near hypothesized spawning habitat. The recent one in the Potomac was in prime spawning habitat during the right time of year. Very interesting collection. I would have loved to have gotten a genetic sample and a telemetry tag in that fish. I talked to the two guys that caught the shortnose; they did everything perfectly. Much better than I would have probably done.”

**John Page Williams** was raised in Richmond and retired in 2019 from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation after a long career working as a naturalist and field educator on streams, creeks, rivers, and open Bay throughout the Chesapeake watershed in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. As he has also done for many years, he continues to review powerboats and write on fishing and environmental issues for *BOATING*, *Chesapeake Bay*, and *Virginia Wildlife* magazines.







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Figure 1

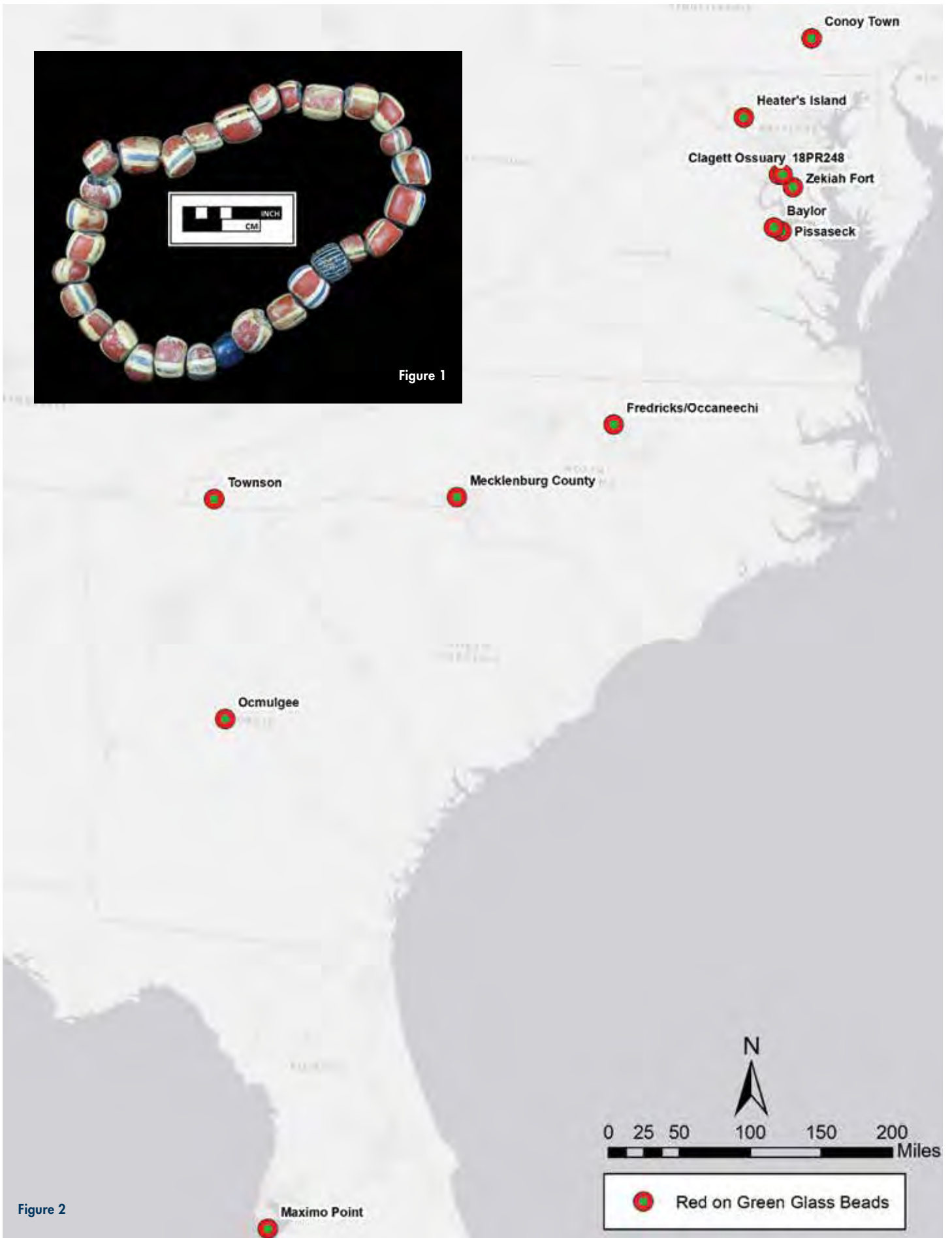


Figure 2



# Gateway to the Interior: Native Settlements around Portobago Bay, c. 1670–1705

By Julia A. King

In 1937, a cache (buried deposit) containing several thousand glass beads was uncovered at the site of an ancient Indian town on the Rappahannock River's north bank near Leedstown (Figure 1). Beads from the cache had been produced in European glasshouses in the mid- to late seventeenth century and then shipped to Virginia where they found their way into native hands. Types similar to the cache's red, black, and striped beads, while almost entirely absent at nearby English settlements, have been found at contemporary native settlements from Florida to New York and as far west as Tennessee and Alabama. Plotted on a map, the beads provide a dramatic visual representation of the Rappahannock River's role as a crossroads at the peripheries of Atlantic world markets to the east and native towns to the west and south (Figure 2).

Black and red glass beads similar to those recovered from the cache have also been found at late seventeenth-century Indian archaeological sites in Essex and Caroline counties. These settlements, strung along the south shore of Portobago Bay, are some of the most important native settlements in the Middle Atlantic region. The beads tie these settlements to the cache at Leedstown as well as to places hundreds of miles into the interior. Along with the glass beads, artifacts recovered from the Essex and Caroline settlements consist of native-made ceramics and tobacco pipes with a few other European-made objects (Figures 3 and 4). Finding native-made materials on native sites is, of course, hardly surprising. What is unusual is the sheer quantity of native materials: literally thousands of ceramic fragments from sites that were only minimally tested.

While visiting Port Royal one morning, my crew and I came across a wayfinding sign noting that Portobago Bay was the head of seagoing navigation in the Rappahannock valley. Only smaller seagoing vessels with skilled pilots, however, could make it safely past Tappahannock. Beyond Tappahannock, the river takes many curves and, while it has a sufficiently deep channel to Portobago Bay, the risks significantly increase if one is not familiar with the channel's route. To get past

Figures 3  
and 4





**Figure 5: Archaeological investigations along the Rappahannock River reveal details about the lives of early Native Americans.**

Portobago Bay, river travel requires smaller, shallow-draft vessels.

The juxtaposition of these settlements with the head of seagoing navigation has changed how we think of these native settlements. We knew from a journal kept by an unidentified Frenchman that the native people living along Portobago Bay were producing goods, including ceramic vessels and tobacco pipes, for the local English plantations. Indeed, Indian-made ceramics and pipes show up on English sites in the immediate vicinity. What was not as apparent, however, is that these settlements were functioning as provisioning stations for parties of Englishmen and their native guides heading west into the interior. These settlements were situated at a strategic location between coastal settlements and the interior Southeast.

The people living at settlements along Portobago Bay were producing surplus ceramic pots used to hold corn for travelers embarking on journeys west. Travelers probably secured the services of Indian guides at Portobago Bay as well. Across the bay, on the north shore of the Rappahannock, in what is today King George County, Edward “Indian Ned” Gunstocker was probably modifying guns arriving on ships from England for this

trade. As a Nanzatico man, Gunstocker would have known the qualities native consumers were seeking in trade guns. Traders and explorers heading west would exchange these guns for deer hides and Indian slaves from the increasingly militarized towns in the interior. The hides and slaves would be brought back to Portobago Bay and loaded on ships destined for Europe and the Caribbean.

The trade in guns, hides, and Indian slaves that developed in Virginia after 1650 is well known to historians of the James River valley. Few researchers have examined the role of the Rappahannock valley in this trade, or the implications this trade had for the development of early American society. One reason for this absence is that the trade in the James River valley was initially managed by men who became well known in early Virginia history, including members of the Byrd family. Records about English involvement in the Indian trade in the Rappahannock are limited. Instead, archaeological investigations along the Rappahannock River are revealing a story every bit as rich and significant as any river valley in the Commonwealth (Figure 5).

The area around Portobago Bay had long been the homeland of the Nanzatico and Nansemond groups.



As English settlers began colonies along the James, and later, York and Potomac Rivers, Indians displaced from their homelands began relocating to the Rappahannock valley, where English settlement was generally prevented in the first half of the seventeenth century. By the time colonists began moving into the Rappahannock valley, it is likely that the native communities living there had a better understanding of what the colonists were doing and how to reckon with them. The Nanzatico Edward Gunstocker, for example, had legally acquired his land, a move that would ward off any attempts to displace him and his family. Gunstocker, along with other Nanzaticos, persisted in their ancestral homeland, joined by Portobago Indians from Maryland who, fed up with Lord Baltimore, had relocated to Portobago Bay in the late 1660s.

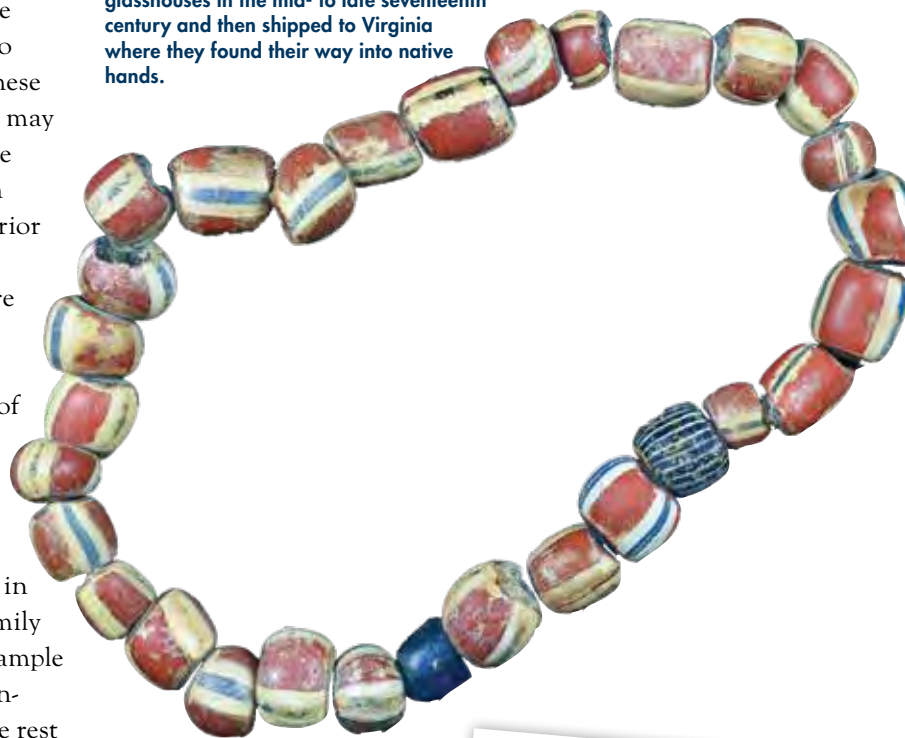
The settlements that sprang up along the south side of Portobago Bay do not exhibit much evidence of deep antiquity. That is, very few precolonial artifacts were recovered from these sites. These settlements could be those associated with the Portobago, who had come here in the 1660s, or even the Rappahannocks, who were moved here by English authorities in 1683. These coalescing communities along with the Nanzaticos may have taken charge of this vicinity, taking advantage of their location at the head of seagoing navigation and participating in the developing trade with interior nations.

This is not to say that colonists and natives were living in harmony. Land, court, and legislative records are replete with evidence of the ongoing struggle for land, and the legal and physical forms of violence that this struggle engendered. The land around Portobago Bay was valuable real estate, both for its agricultural productivity and its access to Atlantic waterways. Perhaps this sentiment shaped what authorities in Williamsburg would do in 1704 when faced with the murder of the Rowley family by several Nanzatico men fed up with the latest example of English encroachment. As punishment, the councilors executed the principal offenders, marched the rest of the Nanzatico community to Jamestown, and placed

the adults on ships bound for Antigua. Children under the age of twelve were parceled out to members of the Governor's Council, presumably as servants.

Back in Portobago Bay, the Rappahannocks, Portobagos, and other remaining native communities must have witnessed what happened to the Nanzatico. The archaeological record suggests that the native settlements around the bay were abandoned not long after. Scott Strickland has used land and census records to show how many of these people dispersed along the upland Indian path from Nanzatico to Mattaponi, eventually settling in the area known today as Indian Neck. The trade in Indians slaves was on the wane, at least in Virginia, as the African slave trade ramped up. The cache at Leedstown was replenished with beads at least once, around 1740. Portobago became Port Royal. One of the most interesting—and overlooked—chapters in Virginia history had come to a close.

**These beads were produced in European glasshouses in the mid- to late seventeenth century and then shipped to Virginia where they found their way into native hands.**



**Julia A. King** is professor of anthropology at St. Mary's College of Maryland where she studies, teaches, and writes about Chesapeake history and culture. She is the recipient of the Society for Historical Archaeology's 2018 J.C. Harrington Award for outstanding scholarship in historical archaeology.



**Volunteers in Essex County and beyond read to children each year during Agriculture Literacy Week to connect children with farmers and agriculture.**

And the proof is in the numbers. Since its inception, AITC has helped provide agricultural experiences to 3.5 million children and supplied 350,000 educators with teaching resources.

“Connecting Children to Agriculture’ is more than a slogan to us,” said Tammy Maxey, AITC programs director. “AITC makes every effort to ensure the children we reach through our programs will be inspired by their growing knowledge of agriculture and take home a curiosity that engages the entire family in more exploration of our industry. We know children and adults alike benefit when they are connected to Virginia agriculture.”

### **Donors Make It All Happen**

AITC’s efforts are entirely donor funded.

Thanks to generous businesses and individuals, AITC has been able to provide educational outreach using a multitude of creative, innovative approaches.

Starting with one elementary teacher workshop in Scott County in 1993, the organization has expanded to include multiple initiatives across Virginia, impacting students in kindergarten through high school.

“Businesses and individuals who donate provide for program expansion and help us grow the number and quality of activities we offer annually,” explained Maxey.

“We continue working to reach new milestones while also delivering quality experiences for anyone who connects with agriculture through our programs. Ensuring value,

## **Donations Enable AITC to Help Connect Children with Agriculture**

By Alice Kemp

Children are more disconnected from farming than they’ve ever been. With farm and ranch families comprising only 2 percent of the US population, and the average person three generations removed from the farm, many children grow up without any farm life experiences.

Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) is working to change that.

Through outreach and educational programs, the nonprofit affiliate of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation (VFBF) has been teaching children about the importance of farming and agriculture for almost thirty years.



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wise use of support and effective programming is of the utmost importance to us.”

Today, AITC has reached youth, families, and educators through virtual education on its website, Facebook page, and YouTube channel

- free teacher resources
  - partnering with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Farm-to-School initiatives
  - educator grant program
  - Agriculture Literacy Week
  - displays at events, including the State Fair of Virginia
  - regional outreach hub
  - newsletters
  - professional development for educators
  - Teacher of the Year program
- “Supporting AITC—whether it be as a volunteer, farm owner, business associate, or consumer—is vital to keeping the agriculture industry alive,” emphasized Faye Hundley, an Essex County farmer, chair of the VFBF Women’s Leadership Committee and a member of Virginia AITC board of directors. “Without donor support, who will teach the next generation about agriculture?”

### **Facilitating Local Agriculture Education**

AITC’s curriculum and lesson plans offer local schools and communities ways to instill an appreciation for agriculture among children—both inside and outside the classroom.

Hundley said she’s relied heavily on AITC resources for outreach efforts. She and members of the Essex County Farm Bureau Women’s Committee have set up booths at farmers markets and other commu-

nity events to distribute learning materials and help show children how agriculture touches their daily lives.

“The resources that are available through AITC are so useful for us to get that message out about agriculture,” Hundley said. “We’ve done lessons on seed germination to help children understand the process of how a plant grows.”

She’s also donated materials directly to schools and childcare centers. She noted that many educators, schools, and childcare centers in the area don’t have extra money to purchase additional educational materials. AITC’s agriculture education training and Standards of Learning-aligned lesson plans for teachers is a way to help bridge that gap—at no cost to school systems or educators.

“AITC is so important in our area,” Hundley added. “We don’t have FFA [National FFA Organization] in our school system, and our children just don’t have a real connection to agriculture unless they can get it in school or through outreach programs.”

### **Grants Help Educators Provide Hands-On Experiences**

AITC also awards grants to educators for school and community initiatives. Since 2013, 400 grants totaling more than \$200,000 have been awarded to a range of K-12 programs in public and private schools, as well as local 4-H chapters. These grants have been instrumental in providing 150,000 youth with opportunities to learn about topics such as gardening, embryology, vermiculture and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiatives such as hydroponics.

Jennifer Hannah, an agricultural science teacher at Central Academy Middle School in Botetourt County, received a \$500 grant in 2020 to build garden plots and teach elementary and middle-school students how to grow their own food.

Her middle-school agricultural science class also led demonstrations for elementary students on establishing grow trays.

When in-classroom lessons were interrupted during the pandemic, Hannah organized virtual group meetings to discuss the gardens. She also made it possible for students to take garden starter kits home to continue learning as their plants grew.

“The AITC grant was a wonderful opportunity for our students and helped us provide younger students and school families with a gardening experience that otherwise would not have been possible,” Hannah said.

### **Ramping Up Virtual Resources**

Recognizing the challenge teachers faced last spring when schools closed, AITC ensured students wouldn’t miss out on farm field trips or lab demonstrations during the school day.

“We were able to quickly pivot to offering video lessons and demonstrations,” Maxey explained. “AITC saw the need for virtual learning content and was well positioned to provide resources.”

An ongoing effort, AITC’s volunteers and partners use video cameras and cell phones to record lessons and have created an extensive virtual library of resources.

With catchy campaigns such as #AgSunday, #TeachMeTuesday and #ThinkerThursday, educators, parents, and students journey through a plant’s life cycle, take

virtual field trips, listen to book readings, and watch cooking demonstrations.

Pamela Hall, a pre-K through third grade STEM teacher at Carrollton Elementary School in Isle of Wight County, has used AITC lessons in her classes. She said they're convenient and integrate easily into other curriculum areas such as English, math, and history.

"The lessons are hands-on and life applicable," Hall said. "Everything's just a click away for me."

Maxey noted that Hall is among many teachers utilizing the resources. AITC's Facebook page garnered more than 500,000 visits last year, with fans sharing the lessons, demonstration labs, and educational games.

"What started as weekly education posts has grown into a multimedia platform," Maxey added. "As of 2021, the program's educational initiatives include AITC's YouTube channel, Facebook page, website, and the Farm Life 360° YouTube channel. Additionally, the program now offers an online professional development course for educator recertification and virtual seminars."

### Agriculture Literacy Week

Since 2011, Virginia's Agriculture Literacy Week has been one of the largest and most successful AITC educational events.

Held in March, it is driven by volunteers who read agriculture-themed books to children across the state, offering them a chance to learn about agriculture, local farms, and the sources of their food and fiber.

The week was celebrated uniquely in Essex County. To complement the 2021 AITC Book of the Year, *How Did That Get in My Lunchbox?* by Chris Butterworth, the Essex County Farm Bureau Women's Committee assembled 140 lunchbox activity kits for students at Tappahannock Elementary School and Light of the World Academy.

"We always participate in Ag Literacy Week here in Essex," Hundley said. "We also make a point to donate agriculture-related books to schools and the public library."

To date, more than 22,000 agriculture literacy books have been placed in classrooms, and more than 15,000 volunteers have read to about 500,000 children in Virginia.

"This is truly an opportunity for a child to meet someone involved in agriculture," Maxey said. "Volunteers often get many questions from children who are inquisitive about how the [volunteer] reader is involved in agriculture, from living on a farm to working in a government or corporate office."

### AITC's Outreach Continues

"Each year, the program establishes goals to create a more agriculturally literate public through

our initiatives geared toward children and educators," Maxey said.

In 2019, AITC launched a hub in the southwestern region of the state to expand its outreach. So far, the hub's coordinators have hosted thirty events and reached 10,000 students. Maxey said AITC plans to eventually establish more hubs throughout Virginia.

The organization also will continue hosting educator trainings, equipping teachers with tools to incorporate agriculture in their classrooms, and partnering them with volunteer and agricultural organizations.

### Want to Know More?

Learn more about AITC at [AgInTheClass.org](http://AgInTheClass.org).

Donations to the AITC program are always appreciated. If you would like to donate, please send a check, payable to Virginia Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom, to P.O. Box 27552, Richmond, VA 23261. Credit card donations also are accepted on the AITC website. Thank you for your support!

**Alice Kemp** is communications coordinator and a staff writer for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. A Virginia native, she grew up in Winchester and moved to Richmond to attend Virginia Commonwealth University where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in mass communications. She has written several articles and news releases for Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom and collaborates regularly with AITC staff to help spread the word about the organization's important efforts.





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Conceptual illustration



## Preserving the Historic Character of **Downtown Tappahannock**

By Beth Sharpe

**A**cross America and around the world, Main Streets are the heart of our communities. They are a direct connection to our history, an indicator of a community's economic health, a symbol of community pride, as well as a representation of the constant evolution of our culture. Main Streets are a social center for positive interaction between citizens and visitors, places where lifelong memories are created. How many times have you heard someone speak of an experience along Prince Street like this? "I remember when everyone came downtown and the streets were bustling with people visiting Anderton's and JT Harris while the smells of fresh baked goods from The Sweet Shop filled the streets."



For many years now, communities across America have faced significant challenges from the deterioration of historic buildings, changes in retail from small local businesses to larger big box stores on the edges of towns, storefront vacancies, and suburbanization. It is our responsibility to protect our main streets and give future generations the same opportunities to experience the sense of community found on a main street corridor and create their own lifelong memories. At the same time, we must also accept that there are elements of continuous change and advancement that are necessary to maintain a vibrant downtown. A revitalized Tappahannock Main Street district will not look exactly as it once did, but it will reestablish that sense of place and belonging among its citizens and create a welcoming central destination for tourists and visitors.

There is no quick fix or single project that can completely turn around a downtown, but communities across America have been embracing the Main Street Movement, a nationwide historic preservation effort that is rooted in the simple idea of preserving and nurturing Main Streets. The National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, offers support to local communities by providing strategies, mentors, and funding through Main Street America and state-level affiliates such as Virginia Main Street. Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for over forty years.

Today, Main Street America is a network of more than 1,600 communities, rural and urban, that share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Since 1980, communities participating in the program have leveraged more than \$89.57 billion in new public and private investments, generated 687,321 net new jobs and 154,435 net new businesses, and rehabilitated more than 303,836 buildings.

**Conceptual illustrations**



The Main Street method is centered on transformation strategies, which are focused and deliberate paths to revitalization using a proven four point model. This approach grew out of rising concern that increasing suburbanization would do irreparable harm to downtowns and their historic structures. The solution crafted as part of the Main Street method implements the asset-based comprehensive plan centered on the following four points:

- 1. DESIGN:** supports a community’s transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.
- 2. ECONOMIC VITALITY:** focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators who drive local economics.
- 3. ORGANIZATION:** involves creating a strong foundation for sustainable revitalization, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the Main Street district.
- 4. PROMOTION:** positions the downtown, or commercial district, as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics.



Tappahannock Main Street (TMS), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is currently embarking on its own revitalization journey as a designated community in the Virginia Main Street program, with a mission of preserving the downtown and designing a viable and thriving economic structure.

Originally formed over ten years ago, the idea of reenergizing the TMS program developed in late summer 2019, when Essex County held a series of community visioning sessions. These sessions were a call to citizens to attend and voice their opinions regarding the future of Tappahannock. The opportunity was well received by the community, and a vision for Essex County and Tappahannock emerged from the sessions. The enthusiasm and engagement of individual citizens and the Essex County and Town of Tappahannock administrations was a true testament to their commitment to our community and highlighted the need for a centralized revitalization program.

Over the next few months, a group of citizens completed an eighty-page grant application to Virginia's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for acceptance into the Virginia Main Street program. While waiting six long months for the results of the application, TMS pressed forward by forming a board of directors, establishing bylaws, creating overarching goals, and hiring an executive director.

In September 2020, Governor Northam announced Tappahannock would be one of only four new designated communities accepted to the Virginia Main Street program. This designation program awards a three-year service-based grant that assigns a one-on-one community development and revitalization officer to guide community efforts. Other designation benefits include architectural design services, signage and wayfinding services, market studies, tourism planning and development, and exclusive monetary grant opportunities among others. Most importantly, by completing this program, Tappahannock can become an affiliate of Main Street America, offering access to even larger national services.



TMS is dedicated to revitalizing Tappahannock while preserving the historic character of downtown. A healthy downtown helps to maintain small-town culture and is the backbone of economic vitality for the community. TMS's transformation strategies are focused on helping to encourage and maintain small business, enhancing arts and entertainment opportunities, improving the aesthetics of facades and signage, creating green spaces, implementing placemaking, and improving the overall livability of downtown.

TMS is committed to producing quality work and to ensuring that all enhancements made in the downtown are appropriate and enduring. TMS has spent the last few months on comprehensive planning and data collection including surveys, exterior structural assessments on all buildings in the district, and business mix and ownership data. The public's opinion on multiple topics has also been sought.

Later this year, TMS will begin to introduce a few short-term projects as long-term strategic planning continues through the end of 2021. Some exciting events are included, such as an art walk on the third Thursday of each month and a WinterFest in November and December.

**We value the thoughts and opinions of every member of the community and look forward to hearing from you.**

**Please visit our newly launched website at:  
[www.tappahannockmainstreet.org](http://www.tappahannockmainstreet.org)  
or call us at  
804-799-9419.**

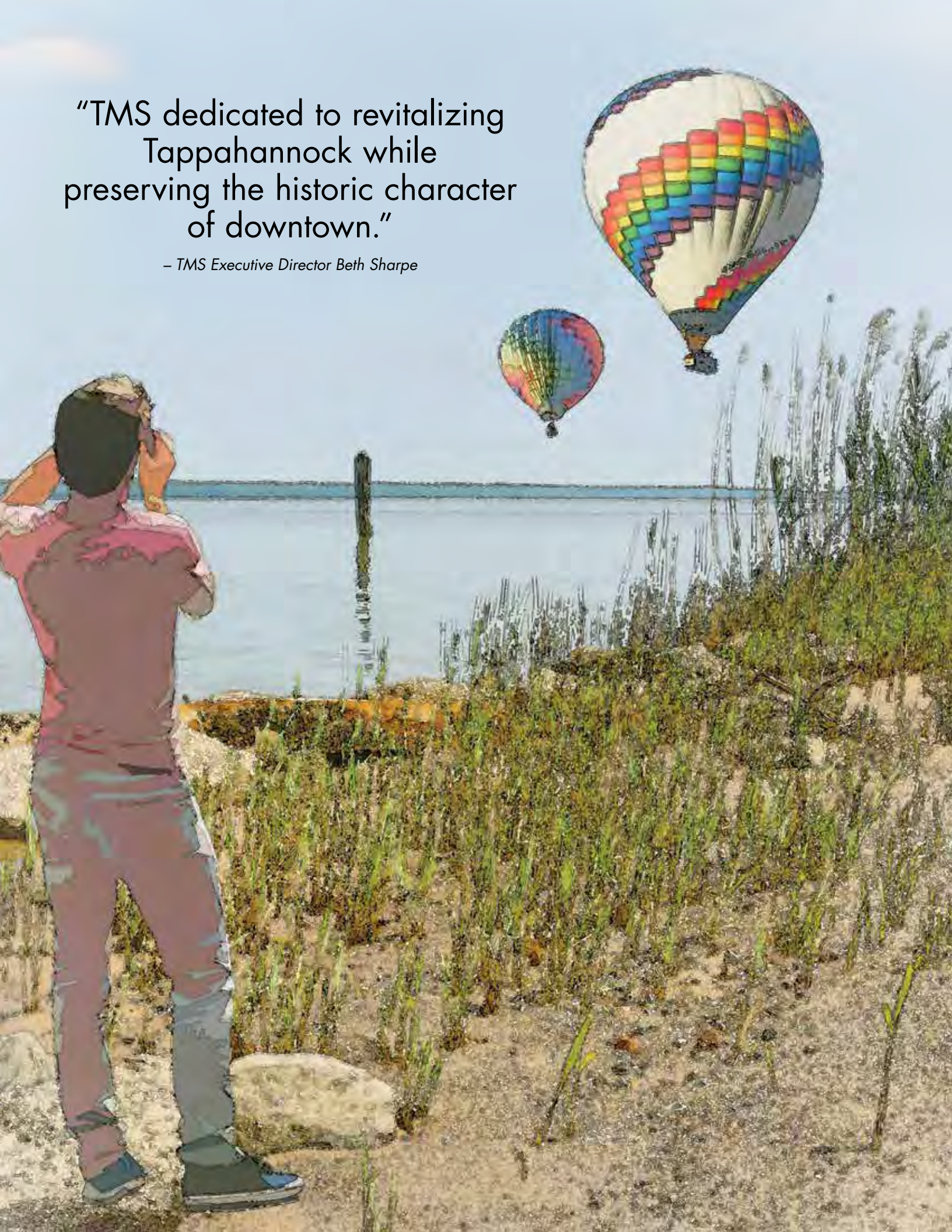


**Tappahannock Main Street Executive Committee** pictured from left: Mavora Donoghue (President), Lorraine Justice (Secretary), Rob Hodges (Treasurer), John Harvey (Vice President) and Beth Sharpe (Executive Director).



“TMS dedicated to revitalizing  
Tappahannock while  
preserving the historic character  
of downtown.”

– TMS Executive Director Beth Sharpe





You Can't Go Home Again.

# Tappahannock on the Move!

By Marty Taylor

The words haunt me as I drive back to a place that I love: Tappahannock. What can I do here now that I am like a stranger passing through, no longer a resident? What can I show my new friends from my retirement community about the place where I spent my happiest years?

Highway 360/17 is not scenic as it passes through town. Is Tappahannock merely the gateway to the Northern Neck? Certainly, when I cross the Rappahannock River bridge, I will feel a surge of excitement. Below me, when I cross, I will see fisher folk in small boats and, along the shore, the towering condo building beside St. Margaret's School's stately

campus. Looking north, I'll see the green lawns of gracious homes along the river front. But there is virtually no river access for those who do not own waterfront property, for those of us who are visitors.

Back in the day, when softball games between Tappahannock and nearby Warsaw were the talk of the town, a fierce rivalry existed between

the Mudshankers and the River Rats. Although the games are a thing of the past, in some instances rivalry remains between the two towns. When Warsaw recently received one million dollars as an incentive grant, it seems Tappahannock stepped up efforts to enhance its image. Coming on the scene at just such a moment was the new town manager.





enthusiastic, educated at the University of Kentucky and holding a master's degree in public financial management, Eric Pollitt sees opportunities for growth and improvement wherever he looks.

His enthusiasm reflects the vision of a newly elected town-council member, attorney Fleet Dillard, native son, and member of a prominent Essex family. It was Fleet's father, Alex, who restored the historic Ritchie House. This major renovation and restoration extended the dignity of the courthouse complex farther along Prince Street toward the river.

"What more can be done to make Tappahannock more vibrant? Who is responsible?" I posed this question recently to Dillard, to Pollitt, and, of course, to Bill Croxton, who, for years as a human dynamo, has promoted the town's health, education, and welfare. I call him the de facto mayor. First, I spoke to Dillard.

His response was immediate and very explicit: "For me, as a resident of Essex and Tappahannock, I am very excited about unleashing opportunities with our tidal waters and the revenue that can result from this. Moreover, I think it incumbent on our local government to provide places for people to access the tidal waters. The last I checked, most people like to have fun, eat good food, enjoy the outdoors, regardless of age, gender or race."

Also, Dillard believes that "every town needs a central park."

As part of the revitalization effort, Tappahannock has executed a contract to purchase the hockey field and tennis courts from St. Margaret's so that a central park, accessible to all, might be developed, he explained.

Wondering how the town could pay for such improvements, I turned to Town Manager Pollitt, who spoke of the recently accredited Main Street entity, led by the new director, Beth Sharp. They are planning to attack physical blight and modernize facades with incentives, as they seek professional guidance regarding how best to move forward with these physical improvements. Strip malls are a major source of revenue for the town, Pollitt noted.

When I spoke to Croxton, he introduced me to Meg Hodges, newly hired director of the Essex Museum and Historical Society. She shared a plat of the just-purchased half-acre park adjacent to the museum. Plans here call for a courtyard with several covered pavilions for visitor picnics. Further, she said, the museum now arranges docent-led walking tours of town.

Tappahannock's other recreational areas include the Rotary Poorhouse Park and the Hutchinson Tract. Although destroyed by a tornado five years ago, Poorhouse Park is beginning to come back to life, providing motorbike trails and off-road biking. The Hutchinson Tract, located along Mt. Landing

Creek, is an often-visited wildlife refuge that offers walking trails and access to water for kayaks and small boats. For a group river experience, tours on the Rappahannock can be scheduled by appointment with Rappahannock Roundstern.

And for those interested in adult beverages, Wind Winery on Route 360 is scheduled to open its tasting room soon; Caret Cellars winery has constructed a new pavilion. And rumor has it that the Moose Lodge would like to build a restaurant overlooking the river on Hoskins Creek.

The Tappahannock Artists Guild (TAG) on Prince Street is a place where artists hang original work for sale and offer classes for all ages. As a member of the River to Bay Artisan Trail, they offer events throughout the year. On October 13–16, they will host a plein air three-day event culminating in an exhibit sale and fund-raising barn party on October 16, to which all are invited.

Perhaps most important of all, the local hospital has become part of VCU Health. This is a major asset for the area.

I guess I will go home again—and often, provided I can take my fishing rod and walk out on a long wharf into the Rappahannock River!

**Marty Glenn Taylor** is a retired educator who lived on Benton Point Road before moving to Richmond three years ago. She is the author of four books: *The River Me*; *From Some Full Heart*; *Place of Rising and Falling Water*; *Benton Point Moments*. The latter is a book of poetry that was illustrated by members of the Tappahannock Artists Guild.





Interested in aviation? Check out our local airport.

# Tappahannock-Essex County Airport

By Todd Hochrein

The Tappahannock-Essex County Airport (XSA) is a wonderful place to go if you are interested in aviation. For the flying community, the airport has great fuel prices and excellent facilities supporting local and regional aviation needs. The history and the benefits of this operation are worth knowing about.

Located along Victor 16 (V16), a well-travelled airway that traverses the East Coast from Tennessee to Boston, the airport is a convenient stop for many traveling pilots and passengers. The east-west-facing asphalt runway is 4,300 feet long and 75 feet wide and in excellent condition. There are GPS instrument approaches for each runway for pilots to use if the weather is poor. The

runway, tarmac, and facilities are large enough to handle everything from small experimental planes to midsize jets.

According to Mayor (and pilot) Roy Gladding, the airport authority was started in the mid-1980s to look at relocating the airport from the town of Tappahannock to the current location a little over three miles southwest of town. The new airport was opened in 2008 and began selling fuel in 2009.

Fuel prices are one of the airport's competitive advantages. The airport sells both regular aviation gas, also called avgas or 100LL, and jet fuel, also known as Jet-A. Avgas currently sells for \$4.27 per gallon at the Tappahannock-Essex County Airport. For comparison,

**Left to right: Todd is pictured on the right with a friend at the airport; the Tappahannock-Essex County Airport from the air; and the well-maintained facility located at 1450 Aviation Road, Tappahannock, Virginia 22560. Go to [TappahannockEssexAirport.com](http://TappahannockEssexAirport.com) for additional information.**





avgas prices are \$4.79 per gallon in Fredericksburg, and \$5.49 per gallon in Hanover. Richmond sells avgas for \$6.68 per gallon. According to the ForeFlight company, the Tappahannock airport currently has the cheapest jet fuel prices in the state of Virginia at \$3.50 per gallon. Now may be the time to buy that jet you've been dreaming about! Fuel is self-serve, but there is usually someone available to help with the fueling. The airport sells approximately 40,000 gallons of fuel each year, usually about 30,000 gallons of avgas and 10,000 gallons of jet fuel.

The airport is managed by Jim Evans. A pilot himself, Jim is attentive to the needs of other pilots and passengers. According to the aviation website AirNav.com, Jim and the team at the airport have received 5-star ratings from visiting pilots. Comments include, "The staff will go out of their way to help you," "friendly people," and "an excellent airport." The facilities at the airport include a large, open passenger terminal and lounge, kitchen, and bathrooms. Loaner cars are available for guests to grab a bite to eat in town or conduct business or personal visits. The airport sees about forty operations per day, including take-offs, landings, passenger visits, and air taxi operations. About 50 percent of the operations are for local aviation, and the remainder for air taxi, military, or transient aircraft. The airport offers flight lessons, aerial sightseeing flights, and professional aerial photography. On the field, part-time mechanic Eric Toia saved the day for me when a flat tire was noticed just after I had landed. Fortunately, Eric had the inventory, equipment, and time to change the tire within a few hours. The automated weather line you can call to find out the wind speed, direction, and sky cover is 804-445-8724.

The Tappahannock-Essex County Airport, with its nice facility and well-run operation, is a wonderful place to go if you are interested in aviation. Furthermore, the river is beautiful to see from the air.



**Todd Hochrein** Todd is a conservation easement consultant and tax credit broker. He learned to fly in New Kent County in 1992. He has over 1,000 flight hours, mostly in his 1994 Beechcraft Bonanza. He likes to fly volunteer trips for Angel Flight East and also uses the plane for personal and business trips.



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# Conserving Farmland, Wetlands, and Timber.

## A Student Conservation Presentation

By Walker Mullins and Samuel Sturt

### 1.

#### Conserving Farmland

##### What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation Easement is a legal agreement that permanently keeps the use of the land in private ownership in order to protect its values.

##### Why is a Conservation Easement important to conserving farmlands?



A Conservation Easement is important because they protect the private farmland in America against development of housing, roads, and industrial usage. Easements also protect resources such as ground and surface water, wildlife habitats, historical sites, and scenic views.



### 2.

#### Why is farmland important?

- Aside from being good for the land and economy, well-managed agricultural land supplies important non-market goods and services all around.
- Gross cash farm income is forecast at \$451 billion in 2021
- In recent decades, residential and commercial development has decimated America's agricultural lands.
- Nationwide, 24 million acres of farmland were lost between 1982 and 2012; This loss of farmland is permanent. It takes natural forces to build richly productive soils
- Each farm is an anchor of stability for other nearby farms.
- Each is a thread of neighboring farms and farm businesses that support and rely upon each other. When a farm is lost, the negative consequences ripple through the community



**Walker Mullins** is a rising sophomore at Saint Christopher's School. He resides in Richmond, and when he is not in class or playing lacrosse, he is either fishing, hunting or doing something outdoors. His father's side of the family owns farmland in Nicholasville, Kentucky, and he spends lots of time working and playing at his grandfather's farm in Northumberland County. Protecting marshes, creeks, and forests come second to preserving farmland as he is an avid hunter.



# 3.

## Conserving Marshlands/Wetlands/Woodlands

Why is it important to preserve natural wetlands and woodlands?

- These natural habitats are homes to thousands of species of wildlife throughout America.
- Wetlands also soak up excess water from storm surges, helping to mitigate flooding in surrounding areas, trap polluted runoff, slowing the flow of excess nutrients, sediments, and chemical contaminants into the Bay
- They provide a unique and often delicate habitat for fish, birds, mammals, and invertebrates
- Easements also are important because they preserve many wildlife habitats in marshland, wetlands, and forests. Some of these species are Bald Eagles, Red foxes, and Wood ducks.



# 4.

## Other reasons why it is important to preserve land.

Preserving more land will also help the ecosystems in America's waterways. With more farmland and timber land that isn't being developed, the less littering, sediment, and unnatural items will be running off into the creeks which lead to our rivers, which lead to the Chesapeake Bay and into the Oceans.

An example of how sediment runoff is affecting ecosystems in our waters is how the Oyster population in the Rappahannock river is declining. Oysters are good because they filter the water removing organic and inorganic particles, resulting in cleaner water which positively impacts other species.



# 5.

## Organizations that help

- Ducks unlimited
- Essex County Conservation Alliance
- Virginia Outdoor Foundation
- American Farmland Trust
- Vims (Virginia Institute of Marine Science)
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION  
Saving a National Treasure

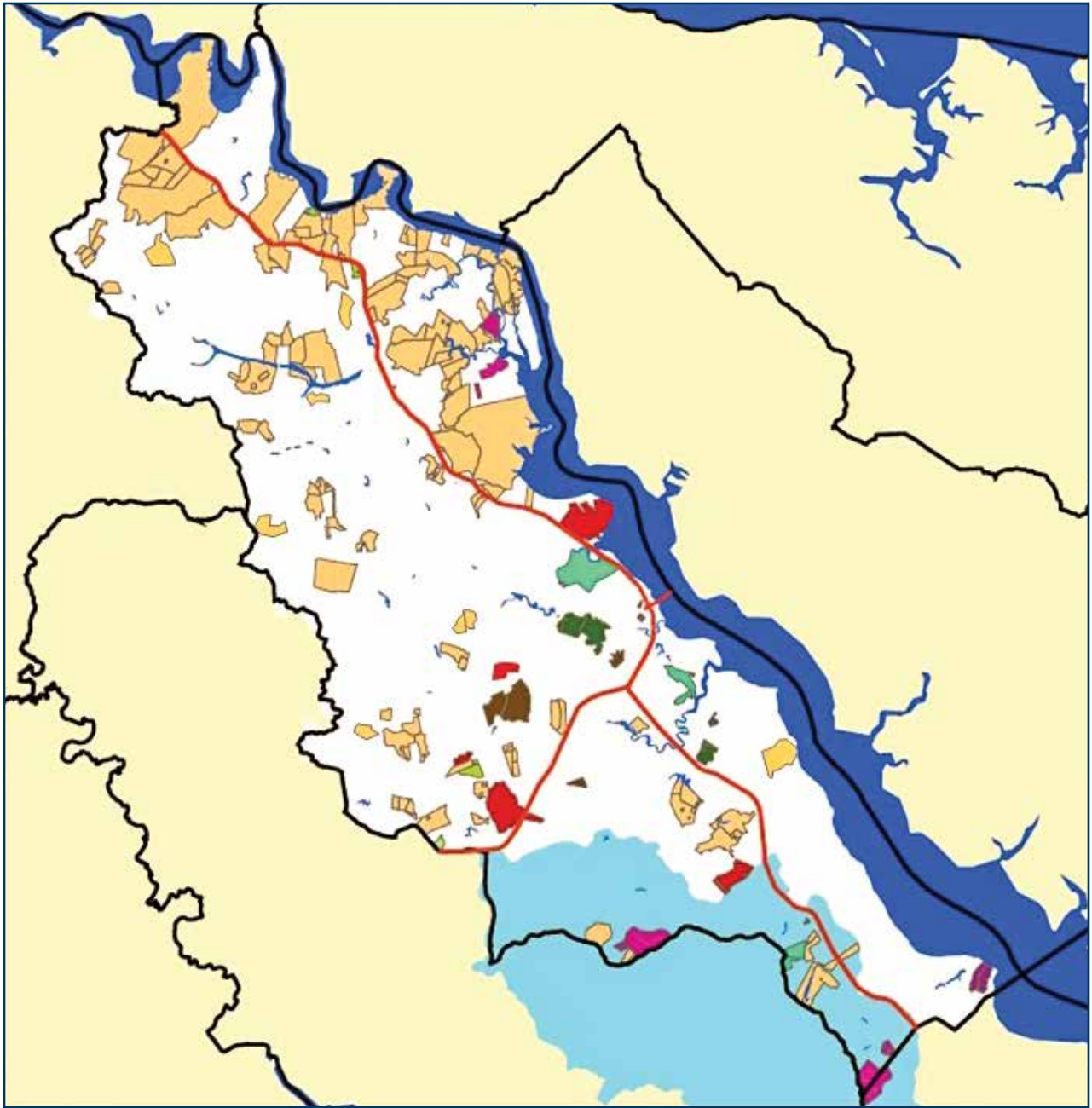


**Samuel Sturt**, a rising Sophomore at St. Christopher's School in Richmond, is an Essex County native. He resides on one of his family's farms in Upper Essex, where he enjoys fishing, hunting, and just generally being outdoors. He loves the Rappahannock River and all things rural. Protecting the river and its creeks, marshes, and forests, as well as farmland, are near and dear to his heart as his grandmother's family has called Essex County home for more than two centuries.



# Protected Lands as of January 2021

## Essex County, Virginia



- Protected Lands as of January 1, 2021**
- County Boundaries
  - Water Bodies
  - Department of Historic Resources (DHR)
  - Fish & Wildlife Services (FWS)
  - Friends of Dragon Run (FDR)
  - Middle Peninsula Land Trust (MPLT)
  - Northern Neck Land Conservancy (NNLC)
  - Tax Exempt (Essex County)
  - Tax Exempt (Federal/State/Region)
  - The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
  - Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)
  - Virginia Outdoor Foundation (VOF)
  - Wetland/Stream Mitigation Banks
  - Dragon Run Watershed

Although this data has been used by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC), no warranty, expressed or implied is made by the MPPDC as to the accuracy or application of the database and related materials, nor shall the fact of distribution constitute any such warranty; and no responsibility is assumed by the MPPDC in connection herewith.



## Virginia Counties with the Highest Percentage of Acres in Easement

County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Clarke	26036.19	113,036.62	23.03
Fauquier	95608.40	449,699.00	21.26
Albemarle	94,241.99	462,469.68	20.38

## Non Tidal Counties

County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Fauquier	95,608.40	449,699.00	21.26
Albemarle	94,241.99	462,469.68	20.38
Rappahannock	32,710.38	170,604.53	19.17
Orange	34,991.24	204,425.72	17.12
Greene	10,126.43	97,920.00	10.34
Madison	15,519.41	204,937.78	7.57
Culpeper	19,289.85	238,692.00	8.08
Warren	8,556.23	139,514.66	6.13
Stafford	4,565.82	177,280.00	2.58
Page	2,973.42	193,306.00	1.54
Rockingham	7,518.05	543,360.00	1.38

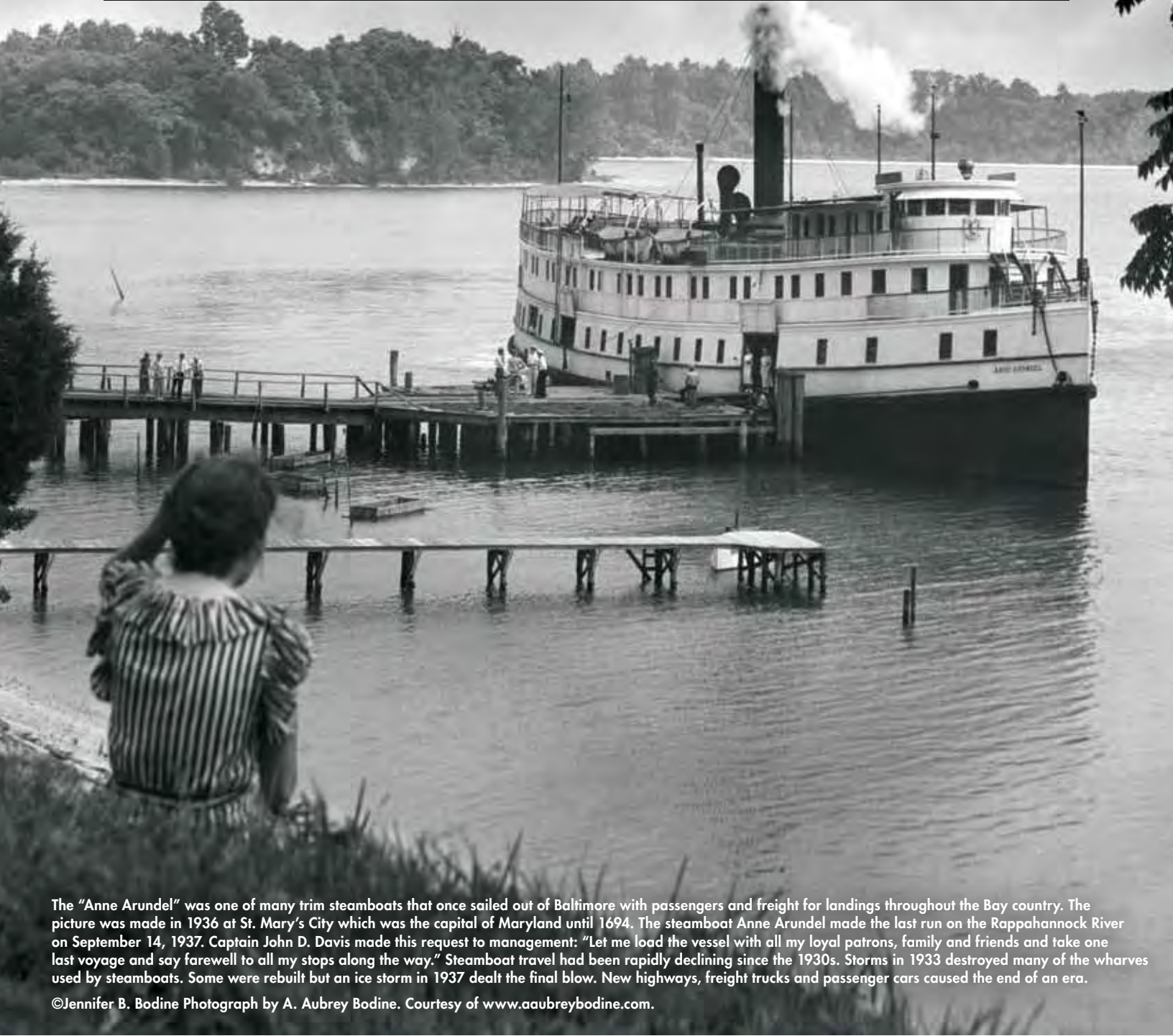
## Tidal Counties

County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Essex	28,887.83	165,120.00	16.89
King and Queen	23,291.17	202,406.08	11.51
King George	7,974.28	115,199.82	6.92
Richmond	7,218.27	122,534.21	5.89
Westmoreland	9,714.76	146,674.97	6.62
Northumberland	7,433.88	123,071.81	6.04
Lancaster	3,472.75	85,208.47	4.08
Middlesex	4,085.94	83,391.87	4.90
City of Fredericksburg	254.80	6,711.00	3.80
Spotsylvania	5,094.07	263,180.83	1.94

Essex data supplied by Thomas Blackwell, Commissioner of Revenue for Essex County. Remaining data supplied in 2020 by the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation.

# Reclaiming Its “Soul”— Tappahannock’s Steamboat Wharf Replacement and Water Access Project

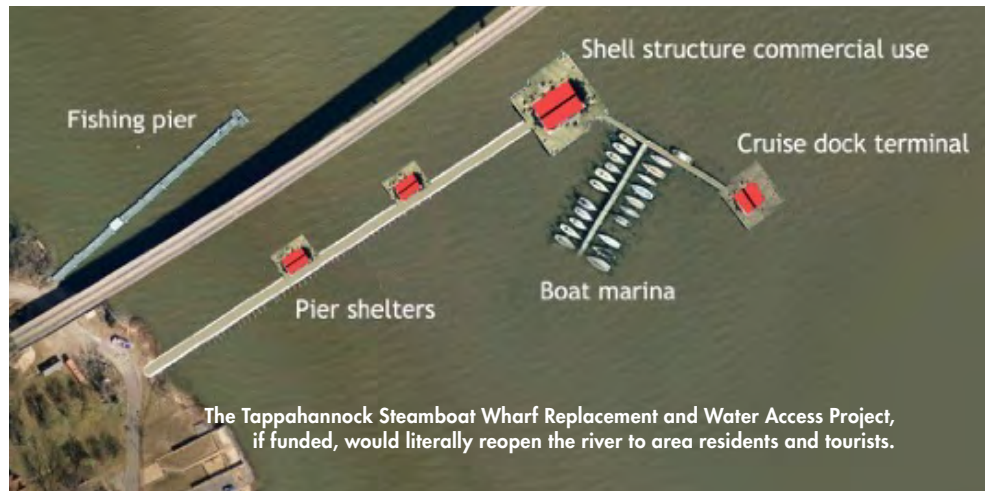
By Wright H. Andrews, Jr.



The “Anne Arundel” was one of many trim steamboats that once sailed out of Baltimore with passengers and freight for landings throughout the Bay country. The picture was made in 1936 at St. Mary’s City which was the capital of Maryland until 1694. The steamboat Anne Arundel made the last run on the Rappahannock River on September 14, 1937. Captain John D. Davis made this request to management: “Let me load the vessel with all my loyal patrons, family and friends and take one last voyage and say farewell to all my stops along the way.” Steamboat travel had been rapidly declining since the 1930s. Storms in 1933 destroyed many of the wharves used by steamboats. Some were rebuilt but an ice storm in 1937 dealt the final blow. New highways, freight trucks and passenger cars caused the end of an era.

©Jennifer B. Bodine Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine. Courtesy of [www.aubreybodine.com](http://www.aubreybodine.com).





As are a number of other small towns on Virginia's Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck, Tappahannock is now making a serious effort to revitalize its old downtown area, promoting the rich history of the town and Essex County, strengthening the economy, developing new jobs, and building a stronger sense of pride in the community.

Tappahannock Main Street, Inc. (TMS), an accredited Virginia Main Street organization, is leading the revitalization efforts, partnering with local businesses, residents, and other community organizations such as the Essex County Museum and Historical Society. While exciting improvements to many retail storefronts are underway or planned, and numerous educational, social, and market events are being scheduled, another major effort is underway to draw in visitors and county residents by redeveloping the town's historic harbor and waterfront.

The scenic Rappahannock River, which flows through downtown Tappahannock, always has been what one may call the soul of this town, which developed because of the river. John Smith visited Tappahannock in 1608 when it was a Rappahannock Indian village whose name meant "town on the rise and fall of water,"

or "where the tide ebbs and flows." Interestingly, Tappahannock's fortune has also risen and fallen with the river.

The area became a significant and prosperous British colonial port after the town as we know it today was formally established by the Virginia legislature in 1680. In the 1700s, Tappahannock's harbor was filled with ships bringing mercantile goods to colonists and departing from the town's docks with tobacco and other agricultural goods headed to England, the Caribbean, and other colonies. British ships landed troops here during the War of 1812, destroying buildings and departing with numerous slaves, who gained their freedom thanks to the British. Later, after the American Revolution, Tappahannock continued developing as a commercial center as steamboats came regularly to the Tappahannock steamboat wharf, carrying passengers, livestock, and goods to other ports as well, such as Fredericksburg and Baltimore.

However, after the original Downing Bridge, running from Tappahannock to the Northern Neck, was opened in 1927, the steamboat trade ended as people and goods could travel by cars and trucks more quickly and efficiently.

Tappahannock's wharf was then used mainly for fishing and crabbing until it was eventually destroyed by a hurricane. For years, most people who live in town, or elsewhere in Essex County, other than the relatively few wealthier families with homes and farms on the Rappahannock, have little or no access to this scenic river for boating, fishing, crabbing, swimming, or nature study. There are now literally only a few feet of public waterfront in downtown Tappahannock, with no place for boats to dock and tourists to disembark and visit the shops, restaurants, historic buildings, and downtown events.

The town and county governments, working through TMS and the Essex County Economic Development Authority (EDA), are now making an all-out effort to redevelop Tappahannock's waterfront, reclaiming its soul as a cornerstone project in their revitalization efforts. Earlier attempts to do so have been unsuccessful primarily because the local governments have very limited funds, due to a weak local economy and limited tax base. There is simply no realistic way to pay for the redevelopment from local funding. The best hope for obtaining funding appears to be from federal government's economic development funds.

Accordingly, TMS and the Essex EDA have asked Virginia's Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine to sponsor a Congressionally designated appropriation of \$14 million to



Steamboat an river freighter at Tappahannock Wharf.

replace the historic wharf with docking slips for transient boaters, construct a fishing pier, and acquire the nearby, small, family-owned marina that is largely now silted in and frequently floods. The marina area, which will require major engineering and redevelopment, can provide for boat and kayak launching, boat refueling, and a significant number of boat slips and storage, as well as a sandy public beach area. This Tappahannock Steamboat Wharf Replacement and Water Access Project, if funded, would be truly transformational for the town and county, literally reopening the river to area residents and tourists, and doubtless bolstering the appeal of historic downtown Tappahannock and strengthening

the local economy. While project funding has been requested, at the time this article is being written, it is not known if the requested \$14 million, or some portion thereof, will be granted. It may well take several years to gain adequate funds from Congress, the state, or other grantors, but local officials have indicated that this project is critical for the area's future, and they plan to continue seeking funds until the project can become a reality and downtown Tappahannock will once again provide ample water access to both residents and tourists.



**Wright H. Andrews Jr.** is a retired Washington lawyer, who now lives with his wife Lisa at "Hazelwood," the family's home on the Rappahannock about five miles above Tappahannock. Among other things, he is a member of ECCA's Advisory Board, President of the Essex County Museum & Historical Society and a TMS Board member.



A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a light-colored cap, a white t-shirt, a red button-down jacket, and light-colored pants, stands in a forest. She is looking upwards and to the right, towards a large tree trunk. The forest floor is covered with pine needles and some green plants. The background is filled with more trees and green foliage.

# Carbon FARMING

By Hylah Boyd

There's a new way for southern pine growers to get paid for their timber: leave it standing. According to an April 21 article in the Wall Street Journal, "Carbon Market Pays Pine Growers Not to Cut," by Ryan Dezember, companies are eager to offset their carbon emissions and are paying southern timberland owners not to cut more than a million acres of mill-bound pine trees. The idea is that the longer the timber stands, the more carbon the trees will remove from the atmosphere. Landowners are getting checks as long as the trees are left standing.



Companies are under pressure by investors and customers to buy carbon offsets that match or exceed their emissions. Timber owners choose the payment levels at which they want to participate and carbon buyers do the same. SilviaTerra, the company that developed the program with a pilot program in 2019, enrolling twenty Pennsylvania landowners, matches the two. The company uses satellite photos, forest surveys, and computer programs to calculate how much carbon the trees can store and determine how many offsets their owners can sell. The price is set with an auction that landowners begin by naming the price it would take to keep them from cutting. The price at the time of this article was \$17 an offset. (One carbon offset is equal to one-metric-ton of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere or, in other carbon reducing initiatives, a reduction of one-metric-ton in emissions made in order to compensate for emissions made somewhere else.) If pulpwood prices are low, delaying harvesting to another year and selling carbon offsets in the interim is an attractive incentive for removing carbon from the atmosphere. Big companies cannot conduct business without generating emissions, so a booming market for carbon offsets has emerged and predictions are that the price of carbon offsets will only increase.

It's not just large landowners who can benefit. An example in the article cites a landowner in Mississippi who sold forty-three offsets by not logging his 133 acres. At the time, pulpwood prices were low, netting him just \$3 a ton. It became a no-brainer for him to leave the trees for another harvest. One of the largest timberland investment-management organizations also agreed to hold off harvesting about 468,000 acres across the South. The pay-to-wait offer was opportune for the company and thousands of other timber owners in the South where there are so many pine trees that log prices plunged to their lowest levels in decades despite prices for finished lumber and pulp that soared during the pandemic.

The potential role of forests and forestry in sequestering carbon to reduce the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has been well recognized. They include forest management not only to store carbon but to generate timber as products to replace other materials with wood. Carbon then continues to be stored and energy requirements for manufacturing other materials are reduced.

It's not just timber that can capture and store carbon. Grasslands can also remove carbon dioxide from the

atmosphere and store it in soil, according to a working group led by the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in Houston, Texas. The institute has developed an innovative measurement-based standard called BCarbon, designed to work for landowners and soil carbon storage buyers. According to Jeff Falk at Rice University, the standard allows landowners and ranchers to determine their own best practices for maintaining grasslands as long as they do not disturb the carbon in the soil and commit to retaining the land in the same way for ten years.

Unlike regulatory programs that set up artificial markets (such as the Renewable Fuel Standard), the proposed BCarbon system is completely voluntary and does not rely on mandatory regulations. The program was developed in Texas, after all. Texas and the Midwest, with vast acres of grassland and prairie, are the focus of the Baker Institute's study, but the program has the potential to work throughout the country. It is designed specifically to work with private landowners as opposed to standard mechanisms such as those in the Kyoto Protocol (between nations) that are too restrictive to function successfully within the private land ownership and property rights model of the United States.

Corporate thinking about carbon has been evolving. Business as usual shifted years ago from simply lowering carbon emissions to carbon neutral operations and products and is now headed to carbon negative operations. Finding innovative ways to capture and store carbon is driving discussions in every sector. Deep storage underground is exorbitantly expensive and until technology can bring the costs down, it remains too costly to implement on a wide scale. Different concepts are being explored including the Baker Institute's nature-based capture and storage utilizing photosynthesis. Stems and leaves above the ground capture carbon and store it in the plant's roots in the subsurface. It's a straightforward concept where carbon is captured by landowners, land is preserved, and credits are issued for the storage. You can call it growing carbon or carbon farming.

As the price of carbon rises, this method could provide an incredibly vibrant industry for the future. Oil and gas companies are talking, banks are insisting on a carbon plan when companies go in for loans, high-tech companies are headed to carbon neutral operations, and consumer groups and investors are looking to companies that are in the forefront of removing, capturing, and storing carbon from the atmosphere. In fact, the market



is fueling a gold rush across American farm country as companies seek to profit from a developing market for pollution offsets.

As with all new technologies, innovations, and developments pushing ambitious goals, there are those who are raising questions. What if a field that has been generating credits for storing carbon is plowed again? “A tremendous amount of that progress in carbon sequestration can be entirely erased with one round of tillage,” said Jason Davidson of Earth Justice. There are also questions over how to measure carbon sequestration since soil types and climate vary greatly from farm to farm and even within the same plot of land. Verification is an issue. There are formal carbon registries recognized in the voluntary markets, but even those have not escaped scrutiny. The Nature Conservancy, the top US seller of carbon offsets, said it’s conducting an internal review of its portfolio following concerns that it is facilitating the sale of meaningless carbon credits to corporate clients as the credits were created in forestry areas for trees that were in no danger of destruction. These concerns are legitimate and not unlike those raised when a small percentage of early conservation easements were placed on lands with little conservation value. As with all burgeoning markets, the potential exists for solving problems, but issues have to be addressed along the way. “It’s a voluntary market, it’s a developing market, it’s a nascent market,” says Ben Fargher, a managing director of sustainability at Cargill, which, for now, is only using carbon programs to offset its own emissions.

The United States Congress, along with businesses, is paying attention to capturing and removing carbon from the atmosphere. The bipartisan Trillion Trees Act (S.4985, H.R.5859) was introduced in the House of Representatives in February 2020 “to establish forest management, reforestation, and utilization practices which lead to the sequestration of greenhouse gases, and for other purposes.” Congressman Rob Wittman, a member of the House Natural Resources Committee, is a sponsor and writes, “The Trillion Trees initiative

will deliver real results, conserve our environment and mitigate the effects of climate change.” Another bipartisan bill, the Growing Climate Solutions Act (S.3894, H.R.7393) also was introduced in 2020 to “break down barriers for farmers and foresters interested in participating in carbon markets so they can be rewarded for climate-smart practices.”

So, what can you do with the grasslands, prairies, or pastures you have enrolled in carbon capture programs? You can still cut hay and graze livestock. You can improve the soils along the way making them more fertile and productive. You can increase biodiversity, restore natural water cycles, and improve drought resistance, all while monetizing the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by storing it in the soil. What can you do with the timber you own? You can collect income year after year when you leave it unharvested and wait as the trees increase in volume and timber prices rise to levels that are attractive. It’s a win-win for rural communities.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Carbon Offset:** For the purpose of this article, a carbon offset measures the amount of carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere and stored in the soil. Verification depends on independent third-party certification to ensure the validity of soil carbon storage.

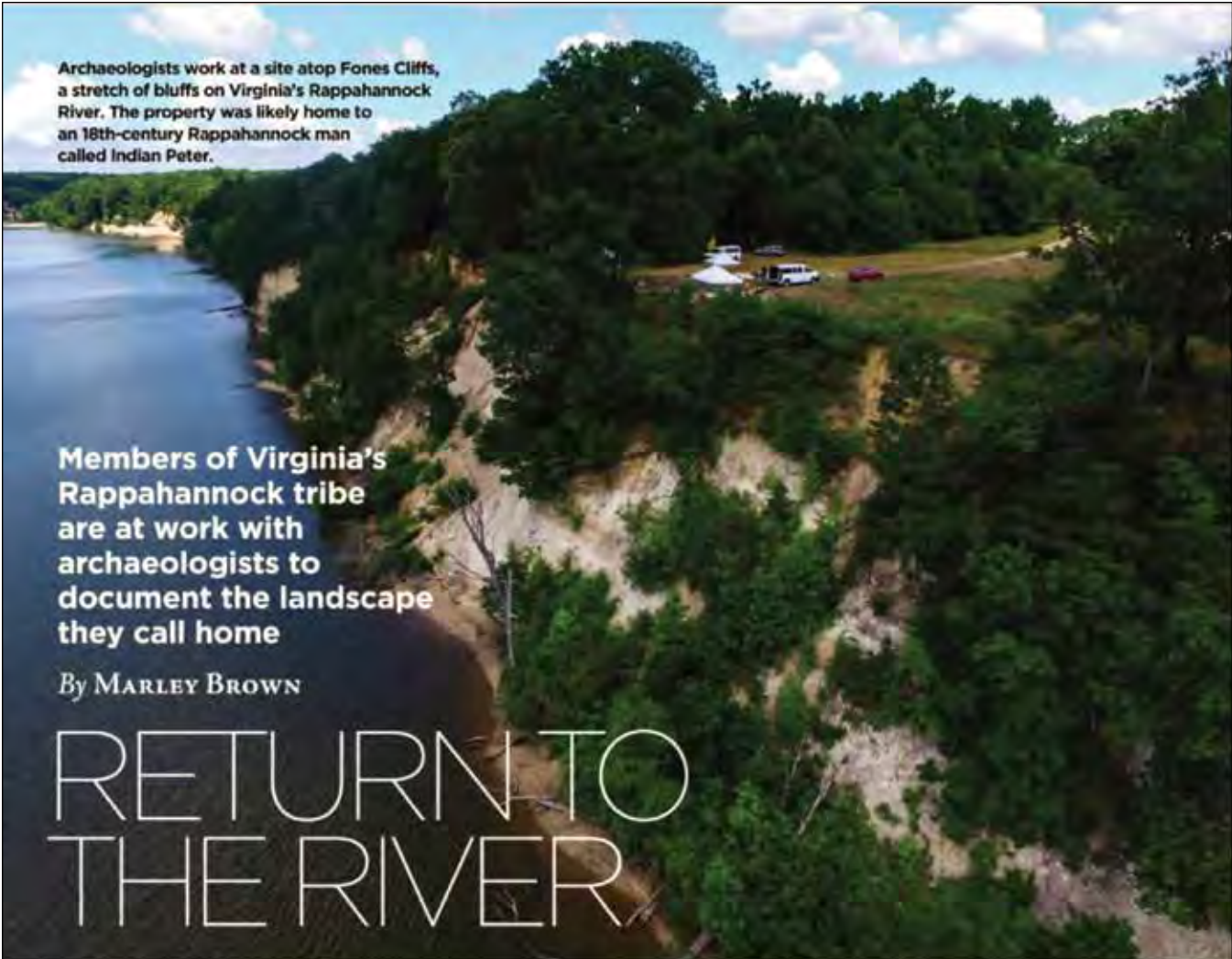
**Carbon Credit:** Once the value of a carbon offset is determined, it can be sold as a carbon credit. A carbon credit represents a one-metric-ton reduction in carbon dioxide.

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**Hylah Haile Boyd** was born and raised in Minor, Virginia, on Elton Farm. She has dedicated years to conservation efforts in Virginia and has received numerous awards including the Garden Club of Virginia’s de Lacy Gray’s Award for conservation and the Garden Club of America’s Cynthia Pratt Laughlin Medal for conservation. Hylah founded Scenic Virginia in 1998, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing the Commonwealth’s most important and historically significant vistas.





Archaeologists work at a site atop Fones Cliffs, a stretch of bluffs on Virginia's Rappahannock River. The property was likely home to an 18th-century Rappahannock man called Indian Peter.

Members of Virginia's Rappahannock tribe are at work with archaeologists to document the landscape they call home

By MARLEY BROWN

# RETURN TO THE RIVER

**S**OON AFTER CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH arrived at Jamestown in 1607, or so the story goes, he was captured by Opechancanough, the brother of the powerful Native chief Powhatan. English explorers wrote that Powhatan controlled a domain spanning much of what is now Virginia, from the state's Piedmont region to the coast. Several tribes reportedly paid him tribute and lived within his Powhatan Confederacy. After Smith narrowly escaped execution through, he later claimed, the intervention of Powhatan's daughter Pocahontas, he set off from Jamestown to explore and chart the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Opechancanough had already taken Smith to a number of Native settlements during his captivity, including at least one on the Rappahannock River. Smith recorded that the Rappahannock peoples, who inhabited both sides of the eponymous waterway, were divided among eight communities, each with a leader, or werowance. Smith mapped or described 43 of their villages, reporting friendly encounters with some groups and hostility from others.

More than 400 years later, the Rappahannock still call Virginia home. The community numbers some 300 enrolled members, many of whom live in Indian Neck, a hamlet about

10 miles west of the modern town of Tappahannock. Since 2016, tribal members have been working with archaeologists to document their traditional homeland, a task that has presented challenges. Centuries of European encroachment and the conversion of woodland to farmland have physically separated the Rappahannock from many of their ancestral landmarks. Their towns, hunting camps, and ceremonial grounds were often built from ephemeral materials and were sometimes relocated for environmental or political reasons. Led by Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe and archaeologists Julia King and Scott Strickland of St. Mary's College of Maryland, the project was launched as an initiative of the National Park Service to identify sites within a 552-square-mile swath of territory that are culturally significant to the tribe.

Using a combination of excavation, geographic information system (GIS) technology, historical research, and interviews with Rappahannock community members, the researchers have revealed a Native landscape that has long been hidden. Smith may not have mapped the Chesapeake completely accurately, says King. Some Native place-names are repeated on the Smith map, and some are found in multiple locations around the Chesapeake. Native settlements rarely accorded

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with European expectations for what a town or village should be. Still, by combining the present-day community's knowledge with the map Smith made in 1608, satellite imagery, and environmental data from the area, the team has identified some 20 places of significance to the tribe and an approximate location for nearly all the settlements Smith labeled. Some of these are large towns whose whereabouts the tribe has, in fact, never forgotten. "I had been taking our youth back to places that our people occupied on the river to teach them about the history as part of a leadership training program," says Richardson. "When the opportunity was presented to do archaeology to actually prove where these places were, I jumped all over that."

**T**HREE OF THESE LARGER settlements, Wecuppom, Matchopick, and Pissacoack, are recorded on the Smith map to have sat atop Fones Cliffs, a four-mile stretch of sandstone bluffs on the Rappahannock's north bank. Smith describes coming under arrow fire near a marsh across the river from these cliffs as he and his companions made

their way up the river. While excavations and surveys along a section of the cliffs that is now a federal wildlife preserve didn't produce evidence of any of the settlements, the team did uncover artifacts that suggest the area remained home to Rappahannock people for decades after pressure from English settlers forced them to move their main settlements elsewhere. In particular, the team believes that, during excavations on a 250-acre parcel of land within the preserve, they uncovered a property described in historic deeds as home to a once-enslaved Native man named Indian Peter.

Indian Peter is recorded to have been manumitted in 1699—about 50 years after English colonists began moving into the area—and may have lived at the site between 1700 and 1730. Richardson says that some of the artifacts the team found, including worked quartz crystals and a wineglass stem carved to resemble crystal, may have been used by Peter in a medicine man-like capacity, or during cliff-top religious ceremonies that were held overlooking the river some 80 feet below. In addition to the wineglass stem, English and German



A 1622 map of Virginia based on Captain John Smith's 1608 map of the Chesapeake Bay shows (circled) the Rappahannock River and many of the sites Smith visited.

archaeology.org





ceramics, a copper buckle, tobacco pipes, a collection of nails, and other objects of European origin are evidence of the flow of goods and people up and down the Rappahannock throughout the colonial period.

King points out that Portobago Bay, some 10 miles upriver from Fones Cliffs, was the point at which the river became unnavigable for oceangoing vessels. "Portobago Bay became a natural provisioning area," King says, "and an important place that linked the trade routes of the Atlantic with the interior." Archival research also uncovered the identity of a Christianized member of a Rappahannock-affiliated group called the Nanzatico, who lived nearby. Edward Gunstocker, or Indian Ned, may have been so named because he was involved in smithing or trading guns. "One of the property divisions outlined in a document mentions his house," says Strickland. Using this information, Strickland was able to approximate the structure's location, and the team hopes to excavate the site in the future.

**K**ING AND STRICKLAND HAVE also gone back to look at previously recovered artifacts, many of which were found decades ago by property owners on sites that have never been systematically excavated. One of these, called Leedstown, is located on the river between Fones Cliffs and Portobago Bay, and was once home to the Rappahannock town of Pissaseck. A cache of cut-crystal and glass beads of European origin was discovered there in the early twentieth century along a pathway to the river's edge. The cache was first created in the 1650s or 1660s, during the early years of English



European glass beads were discovered in a cache at the site of Leedstown on the Rappahannock River. Similar examples have been found at Native sites up and down the East Coast.



settlement in the area. It appears to have been supplemented at least twice. The first set of additional materials was deposited some 20 years later, likely following Bacon's Rebellion, a popular uprising against the Virginia governor asserting the rights of settlers to expand their territory. These offerings may have been stashed by Native Americans to secure spiritual protection in the face of increasing hostility from and violence committed by Europeans. The second addition came in the mid-eighteenth century.

During recent excavations at Leedstown, the team uncovered Indigenous ceramics, including fragments of Potomac Creek Ware and Townsend Ware, as well as more beads, which appear to have been scattered around the site by farming activity. King and Strickland say that the striped beads in the cache, and similar examples, were probably made in Italy. They are found almost exclusively at contemporaneous Native sites ranging from Pennsylvania to Florida. According to King, their distribution at Native sites beyond Leedstown suggests that the network of trade in animal skins, enslaved Indians, and guns that began in Virginia in the seventeenth century had expanded to cover much of the eastern seaboard by the turn of the eighteenth.

In an example of the duplicate place-names recorded by Smith on his 1608 map, there are two sites called Cuttatawomen. One lies at the mouth of the river and the other just west of the modern town of Port Royal, some 60 miles upstream. Strickland says that the relationship between the two towns was a mystery until he thought about differences in the ceramics that have been found at various sites along the river. "You can almost make a plot of ceramic types by type of temper along the river," he says. Temper refers to material mixed with clay to prevent shrinkage and cracking when ceramic vessels are fired. Upstream, he explains, it's more common to find ceramics made with a tempering method using crushed quartz, while farther downstream it is more common to find ceramics that have been tempered with ground shells. "At one particular site identified with the upriver Cuttatawomen, we examined an assemblage of nearly all shell-tempered ceramics," says Strickland. He believes that the people who settled the Cuttatawomen site at the mouth of the river may have traveled upriver and brought their ceramic traditions with them. "Whether it's a colony or an important ceremonial place, we identified some really interesting ceramics that were highly decorated and unusual," he says.

Evidence that the Rappahannock traveled across the landscape doesn't surprise archaeologist Martin Gullivan of the College of William and Mary, who has excavated a number of pre- and post-contact Native sites in the Chesapeake, including Chief Powhatan's capital at Werowocomoco on the York River. "The John Smith map is a great



resource," Gallivan says, "but it does apply a fixity and boundedness to these Native societies that doesn't line up with the evidence on the ground." In his own projects, Gallivan has discovered evidence that Native communities in the region were connected through exchange networks across the Chesapeake and north to New England, south to the Gulf of Mexico, and west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. "People were on the move, they were travelers, and they visited other communities," he says. "They had broad geographic knowledge and they could draw accurate maps covering hundreds and hundreds of miles."

Perhaps because of the density of Native settlement in the Rappahannock River Valley, colonial authorities forbade settlers from moving into the region until the 1650s. This led to the area's becoming a refuge for Native communities from as far afield as North Carolina whose lands had already been seized. It was at this point, according to Richardson, that the identity of the modern Rappahannock Tribe began to take shape, particularly after the Nanzatico were nearly all captured by the English and sold into slavery in the Caribbean in retribution after a band of their warriors was accused of killing the members of a white settler family. "We became the dominant tribe on the river and took in the various peoples who had been dispossessed of their land," Richardson says. "I think that it's very important to note that scholars who have looked at the Indigenous history of Virginia describe a great empire under Powhatan, but our leadership was really structured around taking care of and sharing the land."

**T**HE NATURE OF THE Rappahannock's relationship to Powhatan and his dominion has been the source of debate for at least a century. Smith mentions no antagonism between the Rappahannock and the Powhatan Confederacy. Richardson points out that the powerful chief's own brother took Smith to a Rappahannock town—possibly because Smith was suspected of having killed the community's leader. This act, she says, suggests a relationship of relative mutual respect between the peoples. Still, one curious element of Smith's map has stood out to scholars; namely, that nearly all the Rappahannock settlements included on it lie on the river's north bank.

Before conducting their excavations, the team developed a GIS model to find locations with environmental attributes favorable for establishing Native settlements. These included rich soil, a nearby source of freshwater, transportation waterways and landing places for canoes, habitats for aquatic and terrestrial animals, and good visibility across the landscape. The GIS model, which is based in large part on publicly available environmental data, shows that such locations are found closer to each other and in greater number on the north side of the river. "Smith shows all of these villages on the north side of the river, and for a long time that was interpreted as a physical means that the tribes in the Rappahannock River Valley were using to distance themselves from Powhatan," says



**Indigenous ceramics, including examples of Potomac Creek Ware (top and above left) and Townsend Ware (top and above right) were also discovered in Leedstown.**

King. "But what we found from GIS modeling is that there are very different environmental conditions on the north side of the river versus the south side, so there might have been more of an economic reason for choosing the north."

The model also helped establish a viewshed, the geographical area visible from any given location. "There are a number of ossuary sites along the Rappahannock, important monuments composed of human remains," King explains. "We've found that

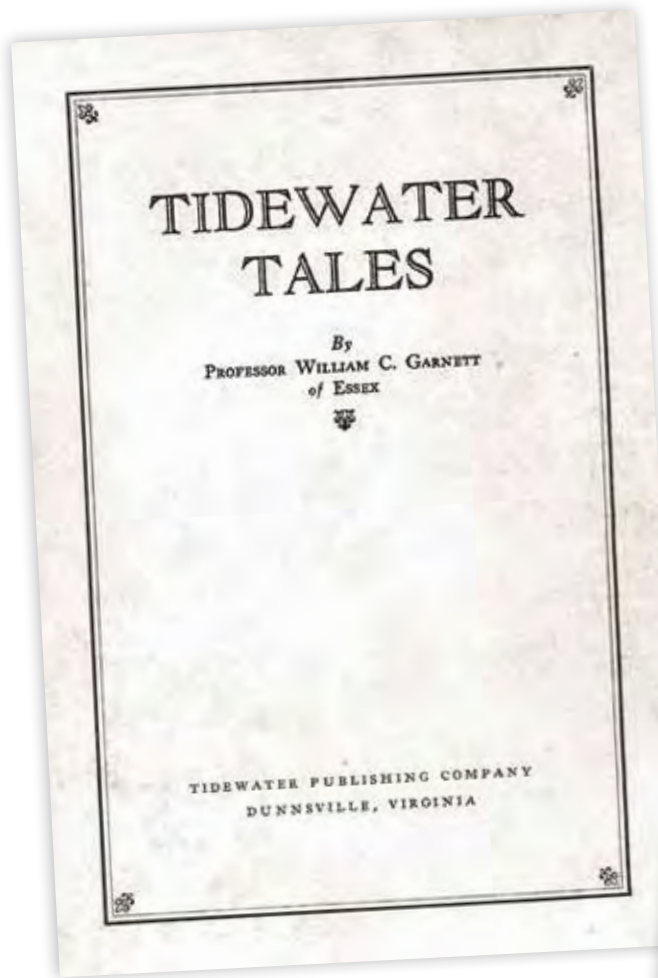


**The base of what was probably a wineglass found at Fones Cliffs was carved to resemble quartz crystal and may have been used in religious ceremonies.**

known Rappahannock settlement sites are often within that viewshed, within the direct line of sight of these ossuaries."

The researchers determined that there was also a seasonal dimension to the location of settlements. "We followed the resources we could gather as the seasons changed on the river," says Richardson. "In the summer, we were primarily on the northern riverbanks, catching fish and growing corn where the soil is so rich." In the winter months, the community would move to the south bank of the river to hunt, often engaging in communal hunts with neighboring groups. While her tribe has been deprived of many of its ancestral spaces, Richardson sees continuity between the past and current movement of her people around the landscape. The combination of memory and research will provide a connection back to the river. "Rappahannock means a place where the water rises and falls," she explains. "We have been a cyclical people that have risen and fallen at certain times in history. When we left the riverbanks, we went inland into our hunting grounds, and eventually we returned to the river again." ■

*Marley Brown is associate editor at ARCHAEOLOGY.*



# ESSEX COUNTY

## Geographical and Agricultural

### Excerpt from Tidewater Tales

By William C. Garnett, Dunnsville, Virginia, March, 1927

In a historical address which is published in this book there is scarcely another line that may be written on the early history of the county, so accurate it is in data, and so very interesting in detail. So, for my part, I shall confine my writing more to the situation of the county, and its agricultural features, than to its history, save in some very local stories which appear later in this volume.



Essex county is about forty miles long and about twelve miles wide, on an average. These measurements, giving it about four hundred and eighty square miles, an acreage of about three hundred and seven thousand, about twenty persons to the square mile, taking the population at nine thousand.

Essex lies its whole length along the broad and beautiful Rappahannock River, a noble and a historical stream, affording food fish of the most choice quality, and bathing shores for the pleasure-seeker, as well as width and depth for navigation. This stream forms the northern boundary of Essex. The good old County of King and Queen lies next to Essex on the south, and is separated from it for a considerable distance by the Dragon Swamp, the headwaters of the Piankatank River. Caroline County bounds it on the West, and the Middlesex County on the east. Along the river there is a low plain

extending about two miles up from the river before reaching a line of hills running the length of the county, but broken by the Piscataway

of the county the land is nearly level. The above refers to Rappahannock, and central districts, as in Occupacia District the general contour of the

Essex County is about forty miles long and about twelve miles wide, on an average. These measurements, giving it about four hundred and eighty square miles, an acreage of about three hundred and seven thousand, about twenty persons to the square mile, taking the population at nine thousand.

Creek, Hoskins Creek, and Mount Landing Creek, all estuaries of the Rappahannock River. From this range of hills on towards the Dragon Swamp the land is broken, but there are a few plateaus, and these gradually become less until in the lower portion of the eastern section

land after leaving the range of hills continues as an irregular plateau until reaching the King and Queen line on the south and Caroline on the west.

The alluvial soil of the river flats is deep and rich, and here and there a deposit of lime is found, making the growing of alfalfa and

1920s farm equipment. Photo courtesy of Essex County Museum & Historical Society.



other lime-requiring crops profitable. Wheat and corn are the basic crops, but oats and rye and other cereal crops may be grown successfully.

weighing as much as two hundred pounds were taken, but this fish as well as the drum and sheepshead, is extremely rare here now, owing, it is

The educational is a most important item in the history of any county, and it may be said that Essex in this respect is yet in the formative state—with high schools on the accredited list, but not fully equipped as yet. The needs of funds in the principal reason given.

This refers to public schools.

Beginning about thirty-five or forty years ago, watermelons were cultivated as a market crop and frequently with much profit. Green peas also form a ready-money crop in the lower portion of the county. Irish potatoes do well in the light soil, and some of the farmers cultivate large fields of them. German clover has been very beneficial, both for early grazing and as a soiling crop. All fruit trees do well in this county when properly worked and, in late years, sprayed against the ravages of the San Jose scale and other insectivorous pests. The fish and oyster industry is an important item in the product of this section. The Bowler's Rock oysters have a wonderful and well-deserved reputation in Washington and other cities. The run of shad and herring has not been nearly so large in late years as formerly, yet some of each variety visit these waters in the early spring. The sport-fishing in the Rappahannock is much enjoyed by visitors from the cities, for there is always a good run of rock, trout, and spot. Years ago the sturgeon was abundant here, and even as high up as the river as Fredericksburg some

claimed, to the long fish-traps at the mouth of the river preventing their coming up an higher.

From Tappahannock down there are always a plenty of crabs during the summer. The creeks flowing into the Rappahannock furnish royal sport for chub fishing, and the marshes for sora shooting in September when this mysterious bird appears in large numbers, remaining until frost and then disappears to where no man knoweth. Trapping in the marshes is another profitable employment, though the muskrats are not as numerous as formerly. Essex used to be very heavily timbered with oak and pine and other forest trees indigenous to this section of the State, but while the young growth is coming on, the virgin trees have nearly all been felled and sawed into lumber. The excelsior mills have claimed much of the young growth of poplar, pine, and gum. Still, there seems no end to the forest growth, and one sawmill is scarcely out of the woods before another follows, certainly in a few years.

What Essex needs is the establishing of manufacturers that will

bring more people here and give a pay roll for their support. And with proper encouragement, these people will settle here, and thus build up our county. There is room and to spare for more settlers, and it is more probable that the Rappahannock Valley Association, with the excellent men as its promoters, may lead to this end. The sawmills and the canning factories are at present the only means of circulating money excepting the daily wage of a few hands. There is room in Essex for a population of 25,000 whereas we have less than 9,000 at this writing. There must be something to attract our young people and give them profitable employment at home, or they will continue to leave and seek employment in the cities.

I will now let appear the history of this county as so masterfully given by Mr. Garnett, as previously mentioned, and then introduce some more local history by following the Tidewater Trail, and by letters which I have written from various sections of the county. These are very local, but contain some bits of history which, I think, will be appreciated.

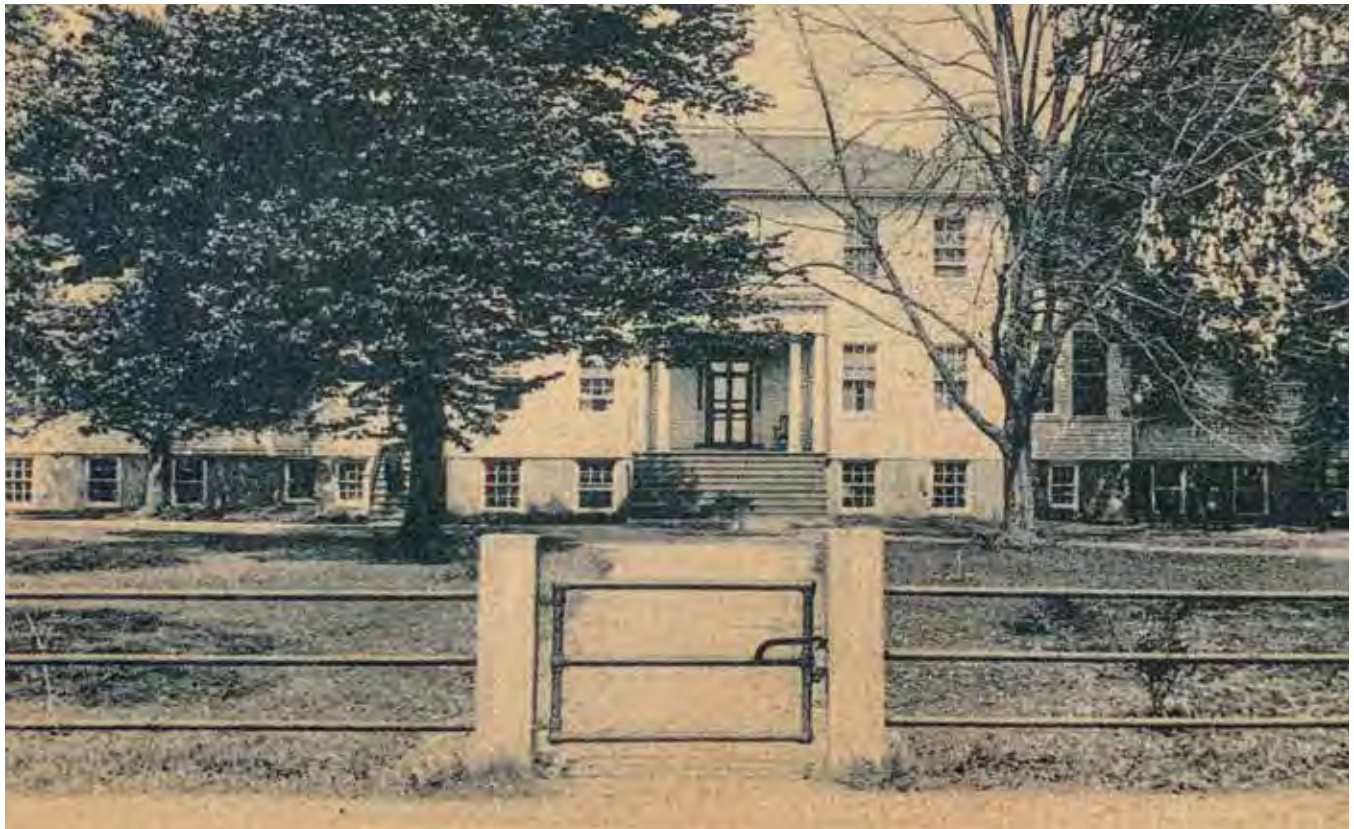
*The educational is a most important item in the history of any county, and it may be said that Essex in this respect is yet in the formative state—with high schools on the accredited list, but not fully equipped as yet. The needs of funds in the principal reason given. This refers to the public schools. It takes a long time to establish and conduct the schools of a*





Pictured from top left clockwise: St. Margaret's School student celebrating May Day circa 1925; 1920s St. Margaret's basketball team; and St. Margaret's Hall.

All photos courtesy of Essex County Museum & Historical Society.





*State so as to coordinate with the colleges and universities. The aim and object of the educational is to place Essex firmly in that condition so that the graduates from our high schools will feel no embarrassment when entering higher institutions. This will come as our teaching force is stronger and the equipment of the schools is nearly complete. Even as the schools now are, the students from Essex have done remarkably well.*

*The St. Margaret's School in Tappahannock is a popular and a growing institution, and evidently will prove a strong educational force.*

*The Ozeana Colored Academy is well managed and is doing much good among its patrons. This is an agricultural as well as a school for general education. So Essex is not lacking in educational nor other advantages. We want more people and we want those people to stay with us and work with us. The opportunity is here; let's make the best of it.*

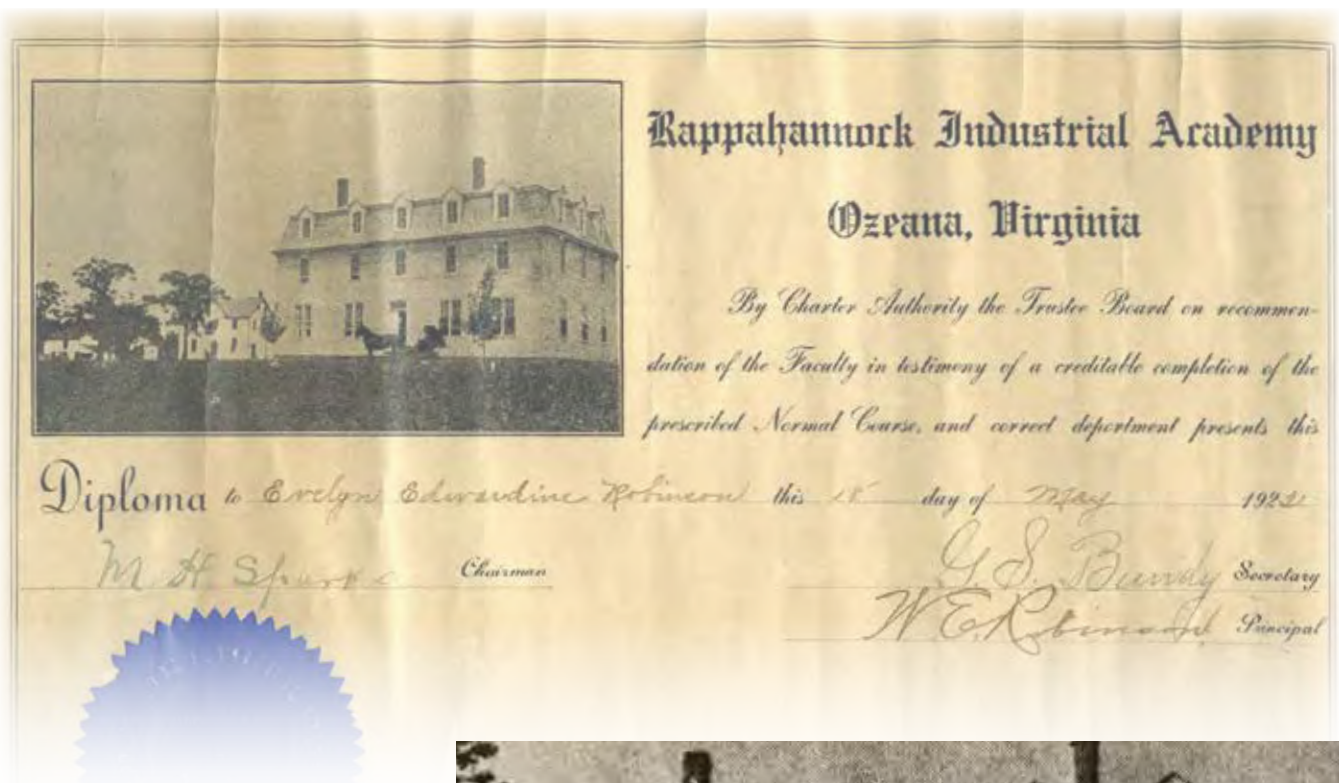


Pictured with his children, William Edward Robinson was principal of Rappahannock Industrial Academy from 1904 to 1933.

Bring more people here and issue that honored pay roll Saturday evenings, for this is what builds up a town and makes the working man return to his home, meeting a contented wife and happy children. Instead of about nine thousand, there should be at least twenty-five thousand people in Essex County. We want men with enterprise and some capital, who will take hold of farm work as they now do in the Northern States, with the "come on" spirit, rather than the "let John do it"

spirit, for hired help is a problem of difficult solution. It is to be devoutly hoped that the Rappahannock Valley Association, through the efforts of its progressive promoters and members, may bring before the public at large the excellent features which this section presents, and encourage more settlers to come and be welcomed by us, to work with us, to instruct us, and by a hearty cooperation bring the waste places to a bountiful harvest as once they were. The highway from Richmond to Tappahannock, the





Rappahannock Industrial Academy was the first high school for African Americans in the Middle Peninsula. The school opened on January 1, 1902, with classes conducted in an old farm house. The high school was fully accredited by 1934.

All photos courtesy of Essex County Museum & Historical Society.

newly completed Downing Bridge across the river, and the Tidewater Trail, that national highway leading from Washington to Fort Monroe, all have contributed to bring this section to the notice of many who scarcely knew us before. Progress, improvement, thrift, and the spirit of loyalty is what we want, and with these Essex will take the place she once had in the front rank of the State. May it be so.

I will later present that excellent historical address, previously mentioned, which is both valuable and interesting, and then follow with a trip from the lower portion of the county up along the Tidewater Trail to the western limit of the county, briefly mentioning what may be seen from the road as we pass, and with such pertinent comments as may seem of interest.



Pictured above top was Towles Hall, the female dormitory for up to 45 students. Pictured below Towles Hall was Berkley Hall, the male dormitory. It had the capacity to accommodate up to 30 students.



# Family Recipes

Passed down from  
Bob Waring's great-grandmother,  
Claude Kriete.

## HOT CRAB CANAPES

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 lb. fresh crabmeat
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 hard boiled eggs, finely-chopped
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tsp. grated onion
- 1 tbsp. minced parsley
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. white pepper
- 1/8 tsp. garlic powder



Foundation for the crab mixture can be a sturdy type of bread or puff pastry. Cut bread or pastry to a size of a cracker.

### Instructions:

- STEP 1: Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- STEP 2: Combine all the ingredients thoroughly.
- STEP 3: Place canape mixture on bread or pastry. Then place assembled canapes on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes.



**Robert Waring Jr.** was born and raised in Essex County and graduated Randolph-Macon College in 1992. Presently he works for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation in the area of precision nutrient management and cover crops. Bob is an elected member of the executive board for the Southern Cover Crops Council, participant in the Precision Sustainable Agriculture Farmer Think Tank with the University of Florida, as well as Chair of Virginia's Cover Crop and Nutrient Management Technical Advisory Subcommittee. In addition to working for Virginia DCR, Bob works for Brandon Farms, a third generation



## OLD FASHIONED SALLY LUNN BREAD

### *Ingredients:*

4 cups flour  
1 cup milk  
½ cup sugar  
4 eggs  
1 package dry yeast (may use rapid rise yeast)  
¾ cup butter  
1 tsp. salt

### *Instructions:*

STEP 1: Stir together 2 cups flour and yeast.  
STEP 2: Heat butter, milk and sugar over low heat until just warm, stirring constantly.  
STEP 3: Add liquid to flour mixture. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed.  
STEP 4: Blend in eggs and salt.  
STEP 5: Add 1 cup flour, and using mixer, beat at medium speed for 1 minute.  
STEP 6: Stir in the remaining 1 cup of flour.  
STEP 7: Pour into a greased bowl and let rise in a warm place until doubled. Stir down.  
STEP 8: Pour into a well-greased Bundt pan, 2 loaf pans, or 3 mini pans.  
Let rise until doubled, about 45 minutes. Don't let it rise too much.  
STEP 9: Bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.  
Cool and remove from pan.

Serve warm.



family farm, where they integrate cover cropping systems as a means of increasing soil health. The farm was second in the state to hold a Resource Management Plan certification, which is the highest level of conservation recognition available for Virginia farms. Brandon Farms has been involved with Virginia Tech, NRCS, Extension and local Soil & Water Conservation Districts as a farm cooperator for on-farm research projects.





Sunrise at Sharps on the Rappahannock River. Photo used courtesy of Richard Moncure.

# Scenic River Designation Update

By Hill Wellford

## It is Time to Celebrate!

HB 1819 designating a 79-mile stretch of the lower Rappahannock as a Scenic River was passed by Virginia's General Assembly, signed into law by Governor Northam, and goes into effect July 1, 2021.

The enactment of HB 1819 represents the culmination of a year long nomination process initiated by ECCA, Friends of the Rappahannock, and Scenic Virginia in early 2020. This was no small undertaking. It was a collaborative effort requiring the support of local governments, community organizations, conservation groups, local businesses, civic leaders, and elected representatives to Virginia's General Assembly in the 7-county area that borders the shore of a 79-mile section of the Rappahannock. By any measure, this remarkable stretch of the river, which runs from where the Route 3 bridge crosses the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg

to the downriver boundaries of Essex and Richmond counties, is a treasured resource of Virginia.

Acclaimed for its scenic vistas and ecological importance by leading conservation organizations such as the Chesapeake Conservancy, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Nature Conservancy, and the Audubon Society, this 79-mile section of the Rappahannock changes from high salinity below Tappahannock to fresh water as it approaches Fredericksburg. Unburdened by industrial pollution, it is a stretch of tidal water that hosts countless species of aquatic life, including anadromous fish such as sturgeon, striped bass, shad and herring that



swim upriver to spawn, oysters that thrive in its high salinity areas, blue crabs that can live in waters of high and lower salinity, and a huge diversity of plants that grow in the salt and freshwater marshes that border its shores. The marshes provide a vast habitat and food source for migratory and non-migratory birds and other wildlife. The high bluffs along the river's path support one of the highest concentration of Bald Eagles on the East Coast and serve as a migration staging area for countless numbers of other birds. This area of the river also supports large concentrations of waterfowl, including Canada Geese, Tundra Swan, Black Ducks, and other waterfowl species during the fall and winter seasons.

Virginia celebrated the 50th anniversary of its Scenic Rivers Program in 2020. This was the ideal time for Virginia's General Assembly to consider legislation that would add the lower Rappahannock to the Commonwealth's distinguished list of scenic rivers. When the ECCA and its partners initiated the scenic river nomination process for the lower Rappahannock, we never doubted that this stretch of the river met every qualification for scenic river certification. However, we also knew that this goal could not be achieved without the enthusiastic support of the Boards of Supervisors, civic leaders, and community organizations in the counties and towns that border this stretch of the river. We

were overwhelmed by the local support our nomination received.

On July 1, 2021, the legislation officially designating this 79-mile section of the lower Rappahannock as a State Scenic River will go into effect. We should all take time to reflect on the significance of this development. Scenic River status is state recognition that this stretch of the lower Rappahannock has "outstanding scenic, recreational, historic and natural characteristics of statewide significance" which should be valued and protected "for future generations." As stewards of our environment and students of history, we should all strive to make sure that the scenic and ecological values of the lower Rappahannock and its historic role in the early settlement of our nation are fully understood and appreciated by the next generation. The lower Rappahannock is indeed a "treasured resource" of Virginia which we should never take for granted.

In closing, the ECCA would like to extend a special note of appreciation to Delegate Joshua G. Cole for introducing HB 1819 to Virginia's General Assembly and to his co-patrons in the House, Delegates Betsy B. Carr, Mark L. Cole, Elizabeth R. Guzman, Alphonso H. Lopez, and Robert D. Orrock, Sr. We also extend our gratitude and appreciation to Senator Richard H. Stuart for his role in helping to guide this legislation through the Senate.

**A view of Beverley Marsh with marigolds in bloom and Fones Cliffs. Photo used courtesy of Bill Portlock.**







# Where are the DUCKS?

By Ben Lewis, Jr.

“Where are the ducks?” is a question that waterfowl biologists across the county, and especially in the Atlantic Flyway, hear dozens of times each year. As a waterfowl biologist with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), I’m asked this question most frequently from mid-December to early January. In this instance, unlike most questions about waterfowl and wildlife, there is actually a very good answer! Waterfowl undoubtedly take advantage of favorable wind directions and moon cycles during their migration, but the two primary factors driving waterfowl migration are photoperiod (day length) and air temperature.

Starting in early September with blue-winged teal, waterfowl across the continent begin their fall migration. Many times, these early migrants are smaller, dabbling-duck species such as teal, wigeon, and gadwall, although some mallards, black ducks, and Canada geese are also early arrivals at the wintering grounds. Their migration is triggered by the shortening photoperiod, and sometimes, they are referred to as calendar ducks because they tend to arrive the same time each year no matter the weather, just as Ospreys do in the spring. Other ducks migrate with the freeze line. They tend to be the larger, dabbling-duck species, such as mallards, black

ducks, and diving ducks, primarily scaup and canvasback in our area.

When I’m asked “Where are the ducks?” in the mid-December to early January timeframe, my explanation is that the early photoperiod migrants have either come and gone on their way to destinations further south or the ones that overwinter in Virginia have become educated to decoys and calling, and they quickly learn where they are safe and where they are not. Many hunters use the term stale to describe these hard-to-harvest ducks. When those early migrators either leave or become stale, hunters wait for late migrants to get pushed into Virginia by the cold and ice conditions north of

Virginia. Heavy precipitation during this time of year can also compound the perceived lack of waterfowl by creating ample habitat, spreading ducks out across the landscape until ice conditions freeze them out of their backwater hides. When we have mild winters, such as the ones we have had for the past several years, the bulk of the Atlantic Flyway waterfowl may not make it to the mid-Atlantic wintering grounds until late January, or they may not arrive at all. This is especially true for mallards and black ducks, which often migrate with the freeze line.

Virginia DWR waterfowl biologists recently tested these early migration trends with weekly aerial

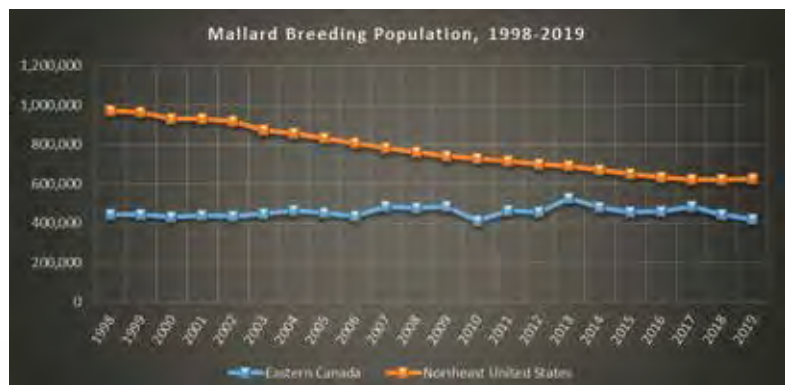
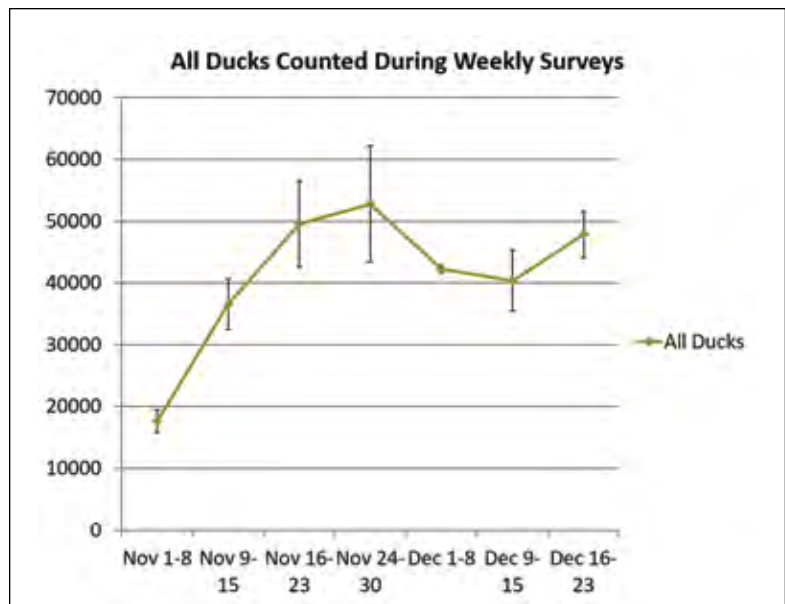


waterfowl counts. Beginning in 2013, four survey units representative of Virginia waterfowl populations and habitats were surveyed weekly from the first week of November until the third week of December for a five-year period. The upper Rappahannock watershed from Tappahannock to Port Royal was one of these survey units. As you can see in the accompanying graph, and as we hypothesized, waterfowl numbers in eastern Virginia rise sharply during the second week of November and peak during the fourth week of November. They then decrease during the December lull in the first two weeks of December before steadily rising again as we enter the peak of the winter migration in January.

Another great scientific approach to tracking the winter duck migration is provided by Dr. Mike Schummer of the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry on his website at <https://schummerlab.weebly.com/duck-migration-forecast.html>. Each week, Dr. Schummer forecasts the daily likelihood of migration into areas of the eastern United States, using weather data and statistical models. This is a great website to follow as you anticipate upcoming crisp mornings in the marsh, and hopefully, plenty of birds in the air!

### Waterfowl Species in Decline

Unfortunately, the answer to “Where are the ducks?” has become more complicated for two species that spend their winters on the Rappahannock River: mallards and the Atlantic population (AP) of Canada geese. I know what you are thinking: Canada geese? A species of concern in Essex County? There are thousands of them here each year!



Your thoughts would be correct. The upper Rappahannock watershed winters one of the highest concentrations of AP Canada geese in the state, with an average of 28,000 being counted over the past five years during the January mid-winter waterfowl survey. But a look at the trajectory of this unique population shows a very different picture.

Every year, these geese migrate approximately 1,500 miles to the mid-Atlantic states from the Ungava Peninsula in the very northern portion of Quebec, which is in the Arctic Circle. When AP geese return to their breeding grounds in early summer, their breeding success is correlated to the temperature during the month of June. If the breeding grounds do not thaw in time, breeding efforts are hindered,

or in some years, nonexistent. Annual reproduction has been below average for five of the past six years. In 2018, breeding conditions were so poor that banding crews did not band a single gosling during a ten-day banding operation, and in 2020, conditions were unfortunately similar. In 2012, the AP goose breeding population was estimated at over 200,000 pairs. It has since fallen to an estimated 120,000 pairs, as estimated in 2019. This population experienced a similar drastic decline from 1985 to 1995, resulting in a closure of the hunting season in 1995, which some of you might remember. With improved monitoring efforts, waterfowl managers are hopeful we will avoid the same population crash experienced in the mid-1990s. We know a thirty-day

goose season with a one-bird bag limit is not ideal, but hopefully, these preemptive restrictions will lead to the same quick rebound we have seen with this population of geese in the past.

Waterfowl biologists often get a similar response when we mention mallards as a species of concern, especially from nonhunters who think of the mallards they see at urban parks. For hunters, the greenhead is the most popular duck in the country, and many East Coast waterfowlers have noticed the declining trend over the past twenty years. In the Atlantic Flyway, there are two primary stocks of mallards: the traditional stock that breeds in eastern Canada, and a separate stock that breeds in the northeastern United States. It is believed that this northeastern population is derived from years of releases of captive mallards into the wild. Over the past century, these releases have occurred in several capacities. When live decoys were banned, there were widespread releases of captive decoy flocks into the wild. Historically, even game commissions along with private citizens began to raise and release mallards to supplement the migratory mallards that visited the states during the fall, and many states still allow the release of captive mallards onto the landscape for hunting purposes. During the mid-1990s, northeastern mallard breeding populations peaked at approximately 800,000 birds. Over

the next twenty years, the population has experienced a steady decline, hitting a bottom point of 440,000 birds, half of the population estimated in the mid-1990s.

During this same period, the eastern Canada mallard stock has continued to remain stable. Waterfowl managers have posed a variety of explanations as to why eastern mallards have been declining. Recent genetics work shows that northeastern mallards, and particularly those in the core breeding areas of the mid-Atlantic states (New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland) are genetically more similar to old-world mallards from Europe than those presumed to be native to North America. The genetic dilution from captive reared mallards may result in lower survival rates, lower reproductive success, and higher harvest rates for wild northeastern stock mallards, explaining the population decline. The amount and quality of nesting and brood rearing habitat could also be limiting mallard population growth in the eastern United States. These factors individually or collectively could be contributing to the mallard declines.

Regardless of the reason for the decline, northeastern mallards are very important to waterfowl hunters and account for 60 percent of the mallard harvest in Virginia and the mid-Atlantic states. As you know, beginning with the 2019–2020 hunting season, efforts were made to

protect this population by decreasing the mallard daily bag limit from four birds to two. The Virginia DWR is committed to determining the causes of this decline, and in conjunction with other states and Canadian provinces that comprise the Atlantic Flyway Council, will be launching a large-scale mallard satellite telemetry study during the upcoming fall and winter. This study will take place over a four-year period, and over 1,000 female mallards will be marked with satellite radios throughout the Atlantic Flyway, including ninety in Virginia. These radios will provide significant information and comparisons of the demographics of the eastern Canada and northeastern US mallard populations throughout their entire life cycle. Results from this study will be vital in developing future mallard harvest strategies, and hopefully, will allow the opportunity of an increased mallard bag limit in the future.

Whether you are anticipating the upcoming waterfowl season during the dog days of summer, or you are experiencing a midseason lull, I hope this article provides some insight on the many factors influencing waterfowl migration when you ponder the question of where the ducks are. We at Virginia DWR and other waterfowl managers around the country appreciate your support of bag limits that are more restrictive than desired so our future generations can ponder the same question.

**Ben Lewis, Jr.** is the Statewide Waterfowl Biologist for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. He earned his bachelor's degree in Wildlife Science at Virginia Tech and a master's degree in Zoology from Southern Illinois University where he studied the wintering ecology of American black ducks on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Ben lives in Urbanna with his wife Katherine and son Walker. In his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing and playing on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.







## Presence of the Past: Essex County Museum & Historical Society Celebrates 25 Years

By David Jett and Zorine Shirley

Virginians are known for their love of history. In 1996, a small group of citizens formed in Tappahannock with a mission: ensure that the historic materials of Essex County would be gathered and preserved for the future. Although a historical society had been active in the county since 1971, local residents lamented the fact that the county had no repository for its historic materials. They began gathering artifacts, photographs, papers, and reference books. Then they embarked on a search for a venue to preserve, display, and interpret them for the public to enjoy.

As the museum began to take shape, it found a home in the former meat market once operated by W. A. Passagalupi, on Prince Street in the heart of the Tappahannock Historic District. The small storefront was rented, cleaned, and painted. Old display cases of wood and glass were purchased by members, in honor of their loved ones, and filled with artifacts loaned or donated by the group.

Among these early donations was a circa 1812, Richmond, Virginia-manufactured cavalry saber with its scabbard that had been found at Poplar Forest near Champlain, and a deluxe steamboat-era travel trunk from Bowlers Wharf. On the walls above the cases, blue fabric-covered panels displayed pictures and narratives relating the stories of historic Essex. It took almost a year of preparation by members of the Essex County Historical Society (ECHS), the Woman's Club of Essex County, and many interested and supportive citizens, before an opening ceremony for the museum took place in May 1997.



The W. A. Passagaluppi Grocery Store on Prince Street, Tappahannock is shown in February 1940. In 1996 it became the first home of the Essex History Museum.



Museum founders David Gaddy, left, and H. DeShields Fisher at the first Museum location about 1997. Both men served as volunteer executive directors.

Twenty-five members of the Woman's Club of Essex County formed a corps of docents to greet and guide visitors. A wonderful addition was the small gift shop organized by a local antiques dealer.

Members of an executive committee were recruited, and fifteen additional people were invited to join the board of directors. The chairman of the board served in effect as the museum's executive director. A membership campaign was initiated, and local attorney Alex Dillard helped to secure nonprofit corporation status for the museum and draw up a mission statement and by-laws.

Soon the museum was seeking a larger space. In May 2000, it moved to its present site, the Maddox Building, a large brick colonial revival building on the corner of Prince Street and Water Lane, also within the Tappahannock Historic District. Commissioned by Susie Warner Maddox of Sunnyside, this building was completed in 1941 and served for thirty years as home for the community post office, drugstore, and offices of Dr. Joseph Chinn. A generous offer by Alex Dillard, owner of the building, of a rent-free occupancy for five years was accepted. At the end of five years the museum purchased the Maddox building and is currently close to paying off the mortgage, thanks to the generosity of members and donors.

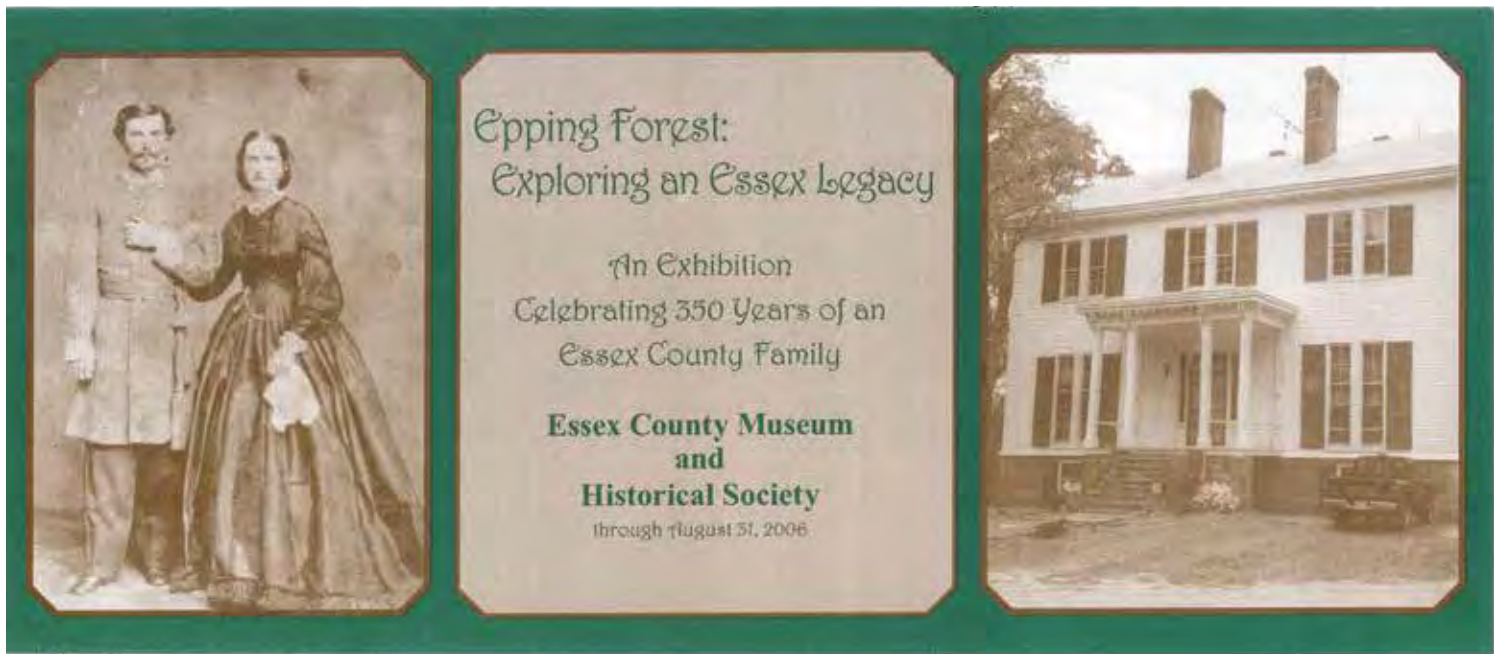
With the museum on a firm footing, volunteer workers now sought the aid of a professional curator and exhibit designer. David Jett was recruited in 2004 to manage the cataloging, storage, and display of

the growing collections, and to research and install exhibits. Catalog records were entered into an electronic searchable database using state-of-the-art collections management software so that each object, when marked, is keyed to an archival storage or exhibit location.

The Essex Gallery, which houses permanent exhibits relating to the county, stretching from prehistoric times to the twentieth century, was refurbished, and a large built-in display case with sliding glass doors was added.







The Epping Forest Exhibition celebrated the rich history of the Rouzie and Baird families of Essex County.

Soon, space for additional exhibitions grew, as rooms in the Maddox building, formerly rented for office space, were transformed into the Carl D. Silver Gallery, dedicated to changing exhibitions. During this time of expansion within the building, space was also created for the Catesby and Lila Maddox Ware Research Room and the Rappahannock River Gift Shop.

In 2006, after several years of discussion between ECHS and the museum, the decision was made to eliminate duplication of effort, pool resources, and to merge as one organization.

Over the years, the number of exhibits has increased within the museum walls, and activities outside the museum have grown as well, contributing greatly to the

mission of preserving and sharing history. Volunteer docents are a vital part of the operations as they welcome guests. Additional volunteers guide visitors through the historic streets of Tappahannock or on a tour of the Rappahannock River, retracing the path of Captain John Smith as he first explored the river valley, or following the route of the steamboats carrying their goods and people up and down the river.

### Education

The museum's education outreach program has impacted youth in communities on both sides of the Rappahannock River. Joan Moore, who served as the education director for the museum, worked with other educators to take museums to the students via the History on the Go program. Children can dig for artifacts, grind corn, and listen to tales of Rappahannock Indians, explorers, founders of the American colonies, leaders of black American communities, soldiers, and sailors. The popular program has been a highlight for many youngsters in the area.

### Collections

The museum collections consist largely of items donated through the years by thoughtful Essex residents



Pictured far left: *The Calm Before the Storm: Life in Antebellum Essex* exhibit featured an early Essex County wardrobe and period clothing and the Dr. Thomas Gray miniature.

Pictured left: The miniature of Dr. Thomas Gray of Tappahannock by Benjamin Trott, circa 1805.



**Rappahannock Voyage:**  
*The Story of Essex and the River*  
currently in the Carl D. Silver  
Gallery, showcases the  
renowned Rappahannock  
oysters and steamboats.

who have identified belongings they believe should be preserved and that will help tell the story of the county's development. Today these items number in the thousands, organized into the categories of objects, manuscripts and archival materials, photographs, and books. Among these are the Bible of Judith White McGuire, author of *Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War*, who spent her later years at the Brockenbrough House in Tappahannock, as well as a lovely Victorian walnut carved and upholstered slipper chair, circa 1850, that belonged to Thomas and Isabella Foushee Ritchie. Items also have been purchased for the collections, such as a note written by General George Pickett requesting reconnaissance information and carried during the Battle of Gettysburg by his aide-de-camp, Edward R. Baird of Epping Forest, Essex County. The latter was part of the Rouzie-Baird collection of over 3,000 family papers from Epping Forest spanning the years 1766–1928 that was acquired by the museum in 2005. A circa 1805 watercolor-on-ivory miniature of Tappahannock physician Dr. Thomas Branch Willson Gray by the celebrated painter Benjamin Trott of Philadelphia was another significant purchase, as was the silk needlework picture depicting the Descent from the Cross of Peter Paul Rubens, worked by Dr. Gray's widow, Lucy Yates Wellford Gray, who operated a school for girls in Tappahannock from 1818 until 1860.

The museum's extensive photograph collection has recently been augmented by a gift of 13,500 images of

individuals, buildings, and sites of Essex County. This important collection, ideal for research, was donated by author and genealogist, Wesley E. Pippenger of Tappahannock. Collections catalogs are accessible on the museum website at [ecmhs.org](http://ecmhs.org).

### Exhibits

Museum exhibits are designed to appeal to all ages and all cultural interests to allow visitors to become

***From Sandlot to Semipro* recalled Essex baseball teams and players.**





immersed in history. In the Essex Gallery a timeline unfolds. Beginning with the zeuglodon, a fifty-million-year-old relative of the whale that once lived here, one passes arrowheads and other stone implements from the Rappahannock tribal era, and then through Old Rappahannock County in the colonial era. The impressive state and national leaders of antebellum Essex give way to twentieth-century trends. From its earliest days, the museum has included black and Native American history as vital and important components of its exhibits. In the Carl D. Silver Gallery, the “Story of Essex and the River” is highlighted by lore of the skipjack, Bowler’s Rock Light, oysters, steamboats, and a hand-built wooden skiff. Wildlife, native to Essex, is also featured, and a cell phone audio tour of selected exhibits is available to museum visitors.

Through the years, museum has hosted special temporary exhibitions that are timely and informative. After the acquisition of the Rouzie-Baird Family Papers, Epping Forest: Exploring an Essex Legacy opened in the Essex Gallery. This exhibit featured the story of this family from their arrival here in the 1600s. Standing in the Gap, an exhibit about the Rappahannock Industrial Academy, highlighted the importance of a church-supported institution that promoted the education of young black students at a time when no public high school was available for them. *From Sandlot to Semipro* celebrated Essex baseball teams and players. An exhibit on the War of 1812, Proving Ground for Freedom, underscored the emergence of American naval power over the

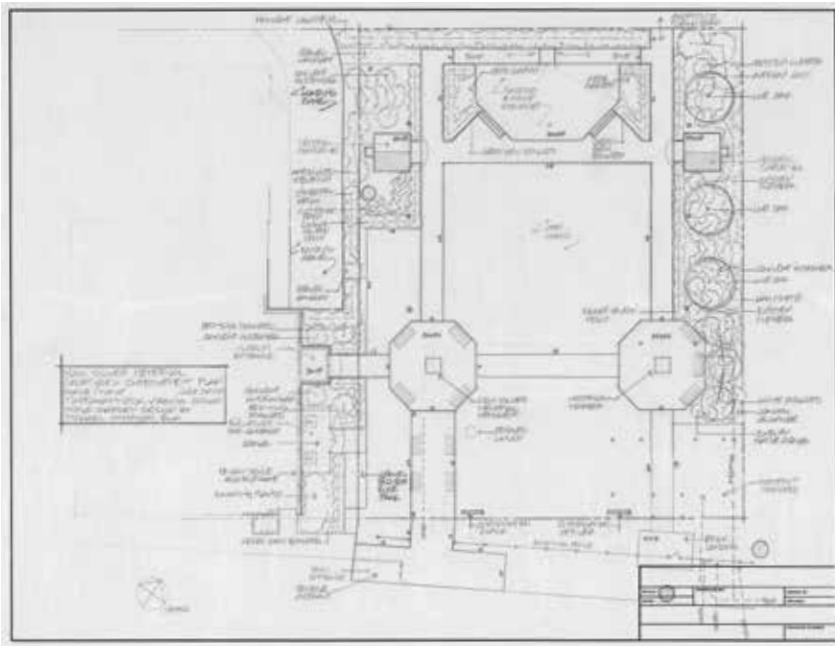


**On the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown, a visit by the Captain John Smith shallow replica was sponsored by the Museum and the Town of Tappahannock.**

British Royal Navy, considered the greatest at the time. The navy fleet oiler USS Tappahannock (AO-43), which served gallantly in many US wars, is represented by a scale-model ship, uniforms, and other artifacts of WWII, including Capt. Harry Byron’s footlocker. Virtually untouched since 1945, the trunk is a time capsule of the era. Currently the museum is celebrating the Centennial of St. Margaret’s School with an exhibition featuring period dress, vintage photographs, and artifacts that tell the story of this Episcopal girls’ school on the riverfront, a Tappahannock mainstay.

### Events

The museum has had tremendous success in showcasing people and sights of historical significance by holding its annual meetings with speakers at many county historic homes. Book signing and musical events



**Landscape Plan for the new Max Silver Memorial Courtyard adjacent to the Museum.**

illustrated Essex County Historic Homes by Gordon and Anita Harrower and Robert LaFollette, affectionately known as the Green Book, is currently out of print, but a copy can be accessed in the Ware Research Room; the museum plans to reissue it in the future. *Memoirs of Ivy Wood Hunt (1874–1962)* describes the windblown life of a sailor out of Bowlers Wharf. Another book by the Harrowers, *To the Color, Essex County Veterans Tell Their Stories*, was also published by the museum. These two books are available in the gift shop. *On the Road in Essex County* features a series of articles by Zorine Shirley,

by local authors and musicians offer the community further insights into the history of the county and America.

Deepening its mission, the museum has also ventured into the field of historic preservation. When Wood Farm, a circa 1760–1800 historic house near Millers Tavern, was slated for demolition in 2008, Essex County Museum & Historical Society (ECMHS) volunteers went to work with preservation advocates Sharon Hinson and her daughter, Marjorie, of [historicproperties.com](http://historicproperties.com). Their generous contribution of expertise and funding for the project ensured that Wood Farm was saved and relocated within the county. This lovely, architecturally significant home, firmly secured on its new site, is for sale by [historicproperties.com](http://historicproperties.com) and represents a wonderful restoration opportunity.

### **Publications**

Publications are a large part of preserving history, and the founders of the museum and ECHS decided very early that newsletters and scholarly research were the safeguard of that information. The *Timekeeper* is the source for current events and activities centered on the museum. The *Bulletin* is a publication that started in November 1971. It became the record for all of the ECHS's activity, but more importantly, it contained page after page of Essex County history presented in detail, with people, dates, and events dating back to the earliest days. Vital to researchers, these scholarly publications are available on the museum website.

Several books authored by its members and contributors have been published by the museum. The richly

based on additional information about the historical highway markers and other historic sites in the county. The museum is currently collaborating with well-known author Lillian McGuire to reprint her groundbreaking book *Uprooted and Transplanted*, a rich history of the black citizens of Essex County from the colonial period into the twentieth century. This popular book will be available again soon.

Another important feature of the museum is the Catesby and Lila Maddox Ware Research Room. A preeminent hope and mission of the founders of the museum was to be the repository for historic documents. Visitors to the Ware Research Room may arrange to access early manuscripts, letters, books, and ephemera, many of which are one of a kind. Also in the research room are copies of reference books on Essex cemeteries, marriages, wills, newspaper notices, and the like, many authored by Suzanne Derieux, Wesley Pippenger, and other local historians

The Rappahannock River Gift Shop is a treasure trove of books on local history. Perennially popular are *The Caponka Caper* by Carroll M. Garnett which recounts the odd story of a wooden WWI transport steamer that ran aground off Tappahannock in 1926, and *Blandfield's Child*, Nell Noland's loving tribute to the Beverley family and their Essex home. *Settlers, Southerners, Americans, The History of Essex County, Va.*, by James Slaughter presents a comprehensive and colorful county overview. The gift shop also features White House Christmas ornaments, art, ceramics, gifts made by local artisans, and fun, educational gifts for children—always with history in mind.



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## What's New at the Museum

The museum's executive committee and board of directors were happy to announce this past April that Meg Hodges has accepted the position of executive director. It had been a hope for many years that the museum would be able to bring on board someone who could further implement the overarching goals of the founders. Hodges's previous nonprofit experience is an asset to the new position and will help the museum build on its early successes. In a statement, Hodges announced, "It is an honor to represent the museum as its director, and we are excited to celebrate our twenty-fifth anniversary as well as our founders and volunteers, who have helped to build and grow our presence, programs, and impact in the community." She was also pleased to announce that the new, user-friendly website is up and running and allows easy access to events, activities, and publications. Hodges added that the purchase of new video equipment will make it possible for Multimedia Director Howard Reisinger to begin a new series of oral histories of the residents of Essex County.

In 2019, the museum, with the help of the Silver Foundation, acquired the lot on Prince Street adjacent to the museum and, early this year, began construction on the Max Silver Memorial Courtyard. Priscilla Vaughan, a long-time volunteer and museum champion, has recently announced that the courtyard is in phase 2 of development. This green space will provide an educational center for outdoor activity in the town of Tappahannock, with a museum entrance portico, a

gazebo, and two memorial pavilions offering shaded space for visitors. A historic marker will share the story of Max Silver, an immigrant who settled with his family in Tappahannock in the 1930s and achieved success as the result of his patriotism, optimism, and tenacity as a businessman. Permanent interpretive panels will recall the history of colonial Tappahannock, early Prince Street, and life on the Rappahannock River. A kiosk will keep visitors and residents informed of current museum news and events. The footpaths weaving between the venues will offer individuals and families a chance to commemorate and honor their loved ones with the sponsorship of bricks or benches that will line the walkways. By next spring, the courtyard will be fully operational.

In the words of the president of the museum, Wright Andrews, "Essex County has an exceptionally rich history, and much of that history is preserved and documented in the ECMHS. Today, we have one of the finest local museums in Virginia because of the initial foresight and subsequent hard work of ECMHS founders and many volunteers over the past twenty-five years. Our recent hiring of Meg Hodges as the museum's executive director is a major step forward that will greatly enhance our plan to revitalize and expand ECMHS programs and service to the community. We honor all those who have helped build ECMHS, too many to name, and we are committed to making it an even better, more inclusive organization that will be able to share the exceptional history of Essex County with many more residents and visitors."

**David Jett** has served as curator of collections and exhibit designer for Essex County Museum & Historical Society since 2004. He received a BA in the History of Art from Old Dominion University, an MA in Education from Hampton University and the Certificate in Museum Management from the Virginia Association of Museums. After living and working in Hampton Roads for many years, David returned to live in Reedville, Virginia where he grew up. He enjoys painting, gardening and supplying peanuts to the local blue jays.

**Zorine Bhappu Shirley**, originally from Arizona, worked for the Republican National Committee in D.C. during the Reagan years, was the Director of CPAC and spent many years in political fundraising. She currently serves as the First VP and PR Coordinator for the Essex History Museum and resides with her husband, Craig at Ben Lomond in Dunnsville.



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- 11) ECCA champions the long and rich history of Essex County and the Town of Tappahannock.
- 12) ECCA publishes an annual magazine with excellent articles dedicated to Essex County.

## ECCA Board Financial Report

By Margaret J. Smith, Treasurer

On behalf of the Directors, thank you for your continued generosity of the last year. The support of our members allows the ECCA to realize our mission of educating landowners on the options available to them through conservation easements and additional outreach aimed at preserving our natural and historic resources.

Seventeen percent of Essex County is now under easement through our collective efforts, more than any other tidal county along the Rappahannock River. In 2020, a year where the COVID-19 pandemic impacted so many, donors supported the ECCA at their highest levels

ever with more than \$60,000 in individual and corporate donations. Your generous gifts over the past year have allowed our organization to upgrade our computer equipment, implement new software, and continue to fund the programs and publications critical to our mission.

Thank you for your continued support, and we ask you to please remember the ECCA as you contemplate giving through the remainder of the year. In closing, we look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting and cocktail party at Joseph and Patricia Gallagher's home, Thornbury, on Friday, October 15th at 6:00 pm.



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**2021 ECCA ANNUAL MEETING**  
Friday, October 15, 2021, 6:00 pm  
at Thornbury, the Home of Joseph and Patricia Gallagher





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#### ESSEX COUNTY HISTORY

Creative early scene of Tappahannock by Sidney E. King displayed on the cover page of "Settlers, Southerners, Americans, The History of Essex County, VA 1608-1984," by James B. Slaughter. Copyright 1985 by the Essex County Board of Supervisors. This book is available for purchase at the gift shop of the Essex County Museum & Historical Society in Tappahannock, or on the Museum's website. [Ecmhs.org](http://Ecmhs.org).