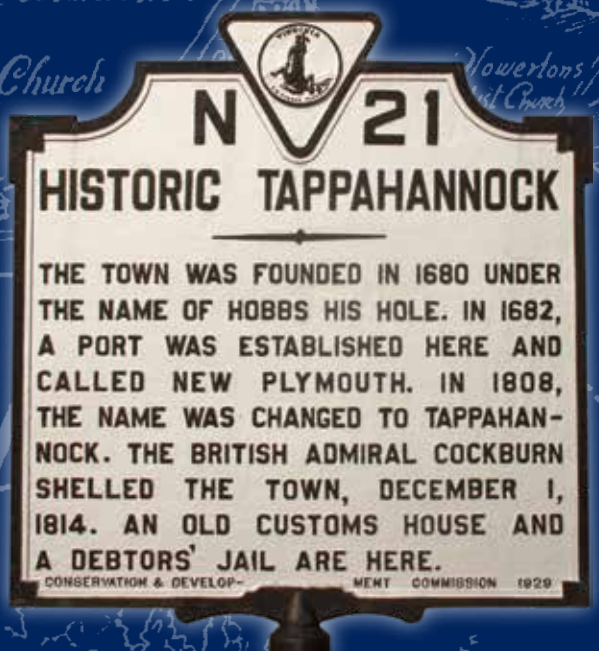




"The Path to the Future which we advocate is one that recognizes the value of Essex being a tidewater community situated on one of Virginia's most pristine rivers, that Tappahannock, its county seat, is a place of remarkable history, and that tourism goals can only be achieved by preserving the rural, scenic and historic characteristics of our County, which are our County's most important assets."

Peter Bance, ECCA President
Hill Wellford, ECCA Vice President



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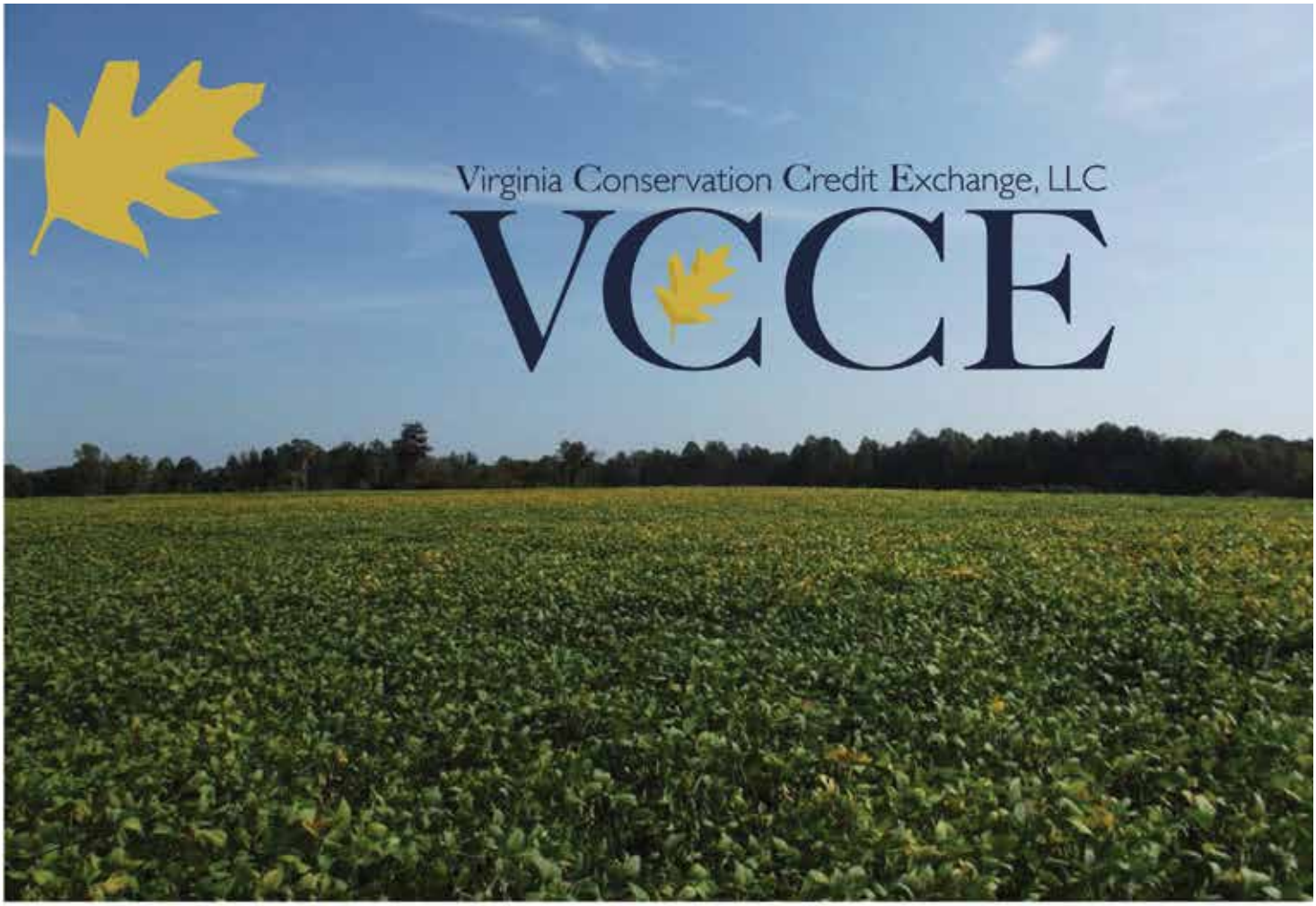

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108 5th Street SE, Suite 202, Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

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Photo credit Hill Wellford

ON THE COVER

Top, left to right:

1. Harvesting corn, a primary crop in Essex.
2. Coming home after a successful duck hunt on the Rappahannock.
3. Captain George Forrest Dickinson hosts family and friends aboard the "Timeless."
4. Sylvester Johnson working to restore brick work at Okalalona.
5. Tundra Swan, a regular winter visitor to Essex.

Center:

6. The 1808 date indicated on the historic marker is incorrect. The name of the town was changed to Tappahannock in 1705.

Bottom, left to right:

7. Judge Joseph Spruill with his hunting buddies, Bonnie and Jenny.
8. Rainbow over a harvested wheat field in Essex.

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Letter From the President & Vice President

CHARTING THE PATH TO THE FUTURE

Captain John Smith's re-enactment voyage up the Rappahannock in 2007. Replica of the shallop used rests at anchor off June Parker Marina near where the original shallop came to shore in 1608. Downing Bridge shown in the background.

ESSEX COUNTY residents are a mix of families who have lived here for many years and those who have relocated to Essex in relatively recent times. It is understandable that some of our residents may have different views and priorities on what the path ahead should be for our County. In a free society, the right to express contrasting views is protected, even when those views differ with the conservation values held by the majority of Essex's long term residents. Each year, Essex's five member Board of Supervisors make decisions that not only directly impact present day issues, but in some instances also affect the path our County will take over the next several years. It is a solemn responsibility.

As we look back on the events of the last 12 months, it is clear that Essex County has been through an unusually turbulent time. It was a time when the County struggled to meet its existing budgetary commitments as the cost of County services increased, when the County's land use taxation policy was again challenged and the SLEAC valuation used by the County for farm land substantially increased, and when an increase in funding for the County's Schools was again proposed by the School Board. It was also a time when Essex's Supervisors held public hearings to receive citizen comment on whether to proceed with a controversial proposal to purchase the June Parker Marina with the intention of converting it into a river access facility and recreational park. Adding to this charged atmosphere was the fact that three Supervisor positions came open for election and political campaigning dominated the news as the candidates sought to distinguish themselves by their rhetoric, which in many cases was highly critical of the then incumbent Board of Supervisors.

The election for the Board of Supervisors is now over and some of last year's most controversial issues have been resolved, at least temporarily, but other important issues remain which we can expect will again be raised that

materially affect the future of our County. Most notable among these are the taxation rates on farm land, forests and open space land, the failure of Essex County's High School and Intermediate School to achieve accreditation on the SOL tests by the Virginia Department of Education, and the need for new sources of County revenue from economic stimulus initiatives.

Peter Bance

Hill Wellford

The ECCA recognizes that our mission to preserve Essex's natural resources, its scenic vistas, farm lands and forests, and its historic properties may be viewed by some citizens as conflicting with their perception of the priorities and economic goals of the County. It is important that we clearly articulate our position so that the Board of Supervisors and all citizens clearly understand our mission and the vision we have for our County.

We are not advocating turning back the pages of history or ignoring the present day economic needs of our County. It is important, however, to understand that our County's greatest assets are the very characteristics we are trying to preserve. They are the critical features of our County, together with the Rappahannock, which distinguish Essex and make it a special place to live. Our citizens are privileged to live in a place of great historical significance as well as a place of natural beauty. The Tappahannock Historic District is one of the jewels of our area. If we preserve, nurture and promote these assets, we believe the County will fuel its economic needs by attracting tourism and encouraging retirees and compatible businesses to locate here.

The conservation and preservation measures ECCA advocates do not burden the County or increase annual costs of operating the County's schools. On the contrary, conserved lands even when taxed at land use rates produce a substantial net tax surplus in revenue to the County because, unlike subdivisions, they require little if any county services. Moreover, lands placed in conservation easements actually help to increase the amount of state funding received by Essex for its schools because the effect is to lower the composite index number assigned to Essex on which the funding is based. The lower the composite index number, the greater amount of state aid a county receives.

The Path to the Future which we advocate is one that recognizes the value of Essex being a tidewater community situated on one of Virginia's most pristine rivers, that Tappahannock, its county seat, is a place of remarkable history, and that tourism goals can only be achieved by preserving the rural, scenic and historic characteristics of our County, which are our County's most important assets. This is why we have continually urged our County's Board of Supervisors to reflect an uncompromising commitment to protect these assets in the decisions they make.

We hope the ECCA's mission and the positions we advocate are clearly understood. We will not be hesitant to denounce and oppose development initiatives and other measures that would destroy or materially damage the rural and scenic beauty of Essex or our Tidewater region. This is why we have strenuously opposed fracking in Tidewater Virginia, and why we are strong advocates for land use taxation and for conservation easements.

We believe the vast majority of Essex residents agree with our vision and the Path to the Future that we advocate. Please support our efforts and make your voices heard when issues arise before our County's Board of Supervisors that impact the future of Essex.

Peter Bance, President

Hill Wellford, Vice President

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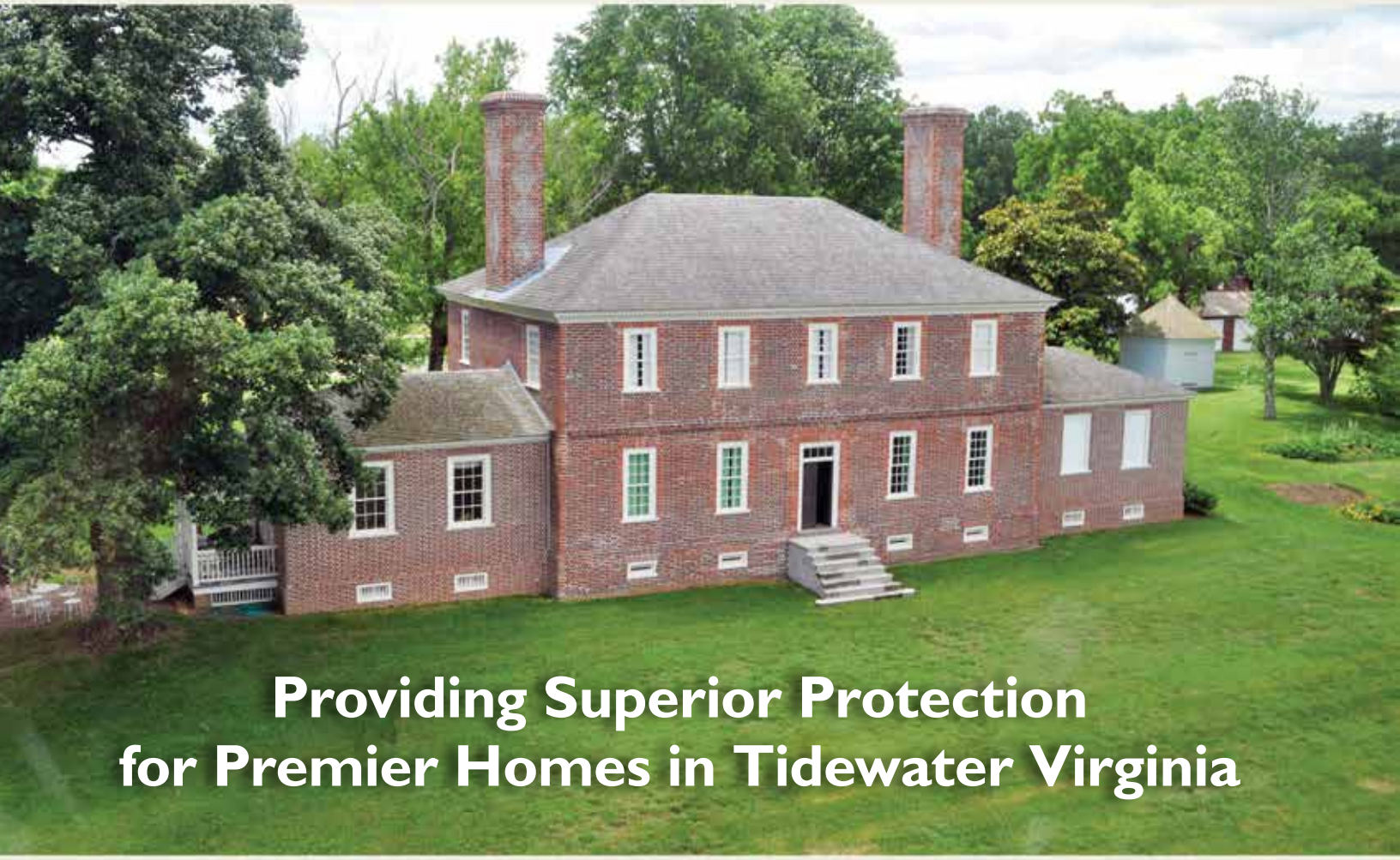

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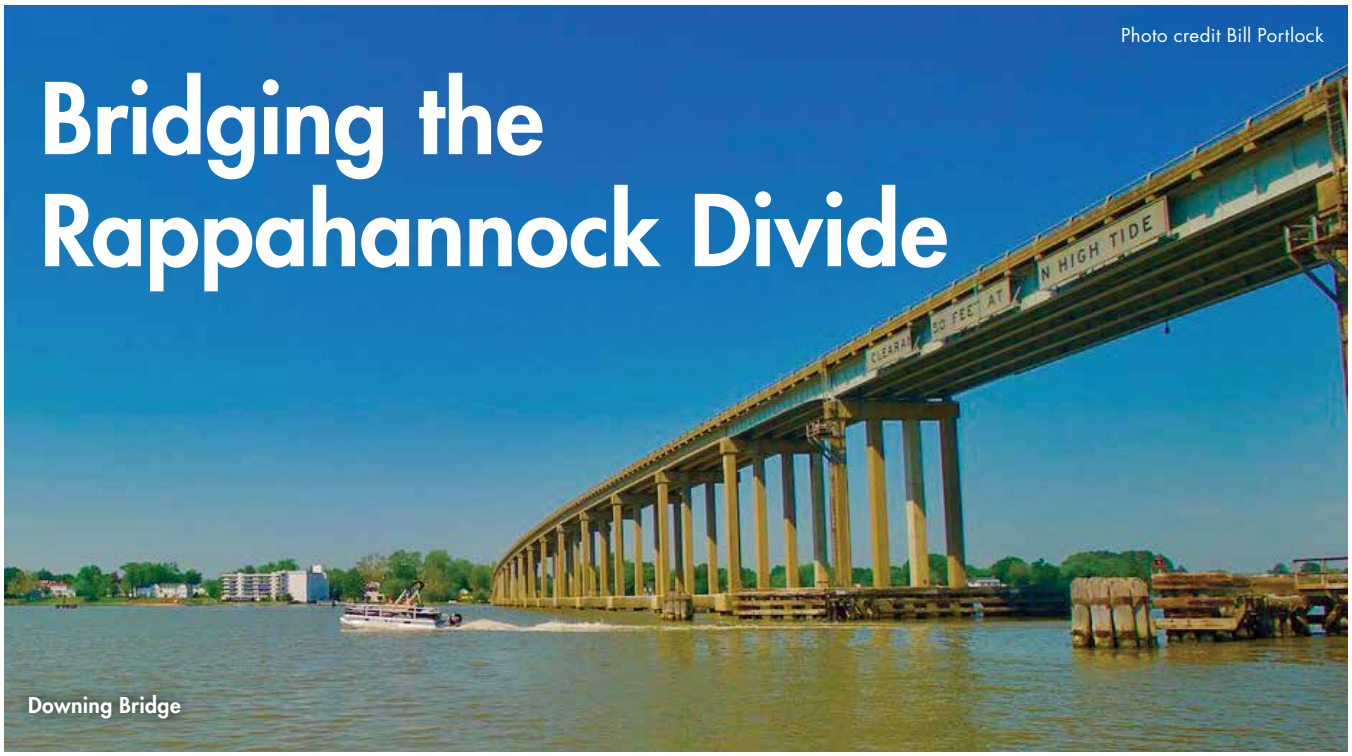


Photo credit Bill Portlock

Downing Bridge

by Lawrence Latané

They say the Rappahannock Indians never considered the Rappahannock a dividing line. The Northern Neck and the Middle Peninsula was their home and the river that bears their name was in the middle of it.

They knew where the black ducks and the mallards lay out of the wind in a winter freeze and they knew where oysters washed ashore when the wind stopped blowing. The river fed them and defined their lives. It unified.

Save for a few watermen, duck hunters, and those obsessed people who fish, the rest of us have lost this relationship with the Rappahannock. We tend to consider the river a dividing line.

It's become a wall, comforting in the way it blocks the concerns of people on one shore from those on the other. But walls cast shadows and cause us to ignore one another and our shared interests at our own peril.

Bottom line is it's harder to convince ourselves to think big when we keep company with our doubts in isolation.

That's why I'm happy to say that the Northern Neck Land Conservancy (NNLC) is working in Essex County.

Landowners invited us to help them preserve their land about a year ago. And because what we have on either side of the Rappahannock is too precious and fragile to be weakened by divisions, the Northern Neck Land Conservancy Board of Directors shed years of habit and looked out across the river and voted unanimously to include Essex County in our mission of protecting farmland and open space with conservation easements.

Through the foresight of their environmentally conscious owners, the NNLC now holds two easements on two properties totaling 1,441 acres. One borders the river and wetlands near Gwynnfield; the other occupies upland fields and timberland south of Tappahannock.

The property near Gwynnfield comprises the sweeping view of woods and marsh seen upstream of the Downing Bridge; the other, bordered in part by Rt. 360, is gathered in the headwaters of Piscataway Creek.

In each case, the NNLC worked hard to write easements that protect nature and preserve farmland by restricting current or future development. Just as importantly, the NNLC was careful to make sure our easements protect and preserve the business of farming as it continues to evolve.

The NNLC is serious about the absolute need for farming and forestry to retain its key role in the economies

of both the Northern Neck and Essex. Over the years, many attempts have been made to bring industries into the region. Many have failed, but agriculture and forestry remain the bedrock of our economy. Efforts to attract new jobs will always be important, but it's essential that we aim them at enterprises that support and complement our local farm economy, not undermine it.

In fact, farming and forestry provide secondary economic benefits to our region that can't be understated. The simple truth is farmland and forest are the next best thing to wilderness at protecting the quality of our waters. The Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac, and the Rappahannock have drawn people to the Northern Neck for centuries, beginning with the ancestors of the Rappahannock Tribe. What's more, the water quality protections the rural businesses of farming and forestry afford have sparked the rebirth of our important and growing oyster and shellfish industries.

Essex landowners lead Virginia in the protection of rural properties: They have conserved more land through easements than any jurisdiction east of the Fall Line. The county ranks tenth statewide in farmland, timberland, and open space that's protected forever.

Interest in land conservation on the Northern Neck is also booming.

In response, the NNLC is pioneering new tools to protect what defines this region. Through the efforts of our executive director, Elizabeth Friel, we triumphed over red tape by winning a $2.1 million federal grant used to buy the easement on the historic farm known as Ditchley in Northumberland County. Previous owners had subdivided and zoned the property for residential development.

The US Department of Agriculture offered the money to protect farmland. It could have been spent anywhere in the United States, but Elizabeth and Ditchley's new owners worked tirelessly to have it spent here, where it would be invested to strengthen our farm economy.


June Parker Marina

By the same token, the NNLC is working with the Department of Defense (DOD). Besides national defense, the DOD is challenged by residential growth encroaching upon its bases across the United States. Thus, military bases at Dahlgren and Maryland's Patuxtent River Naval Air Station are offering payment for easements which the NNLC would hold. We are working with several landowners who are considering the offer.

Essex will continue to be a leader in land conservation. The example set by the Essex County Countryside Alliance is an inspiration to anyone concerned about strengthening and protecting rural Virginia. The group has drawn people together and made them think about rural living and the local, state, and national importance of the Rappahannock.

Now, through the invitation of Essex landowners, conservationists on both sides of the river have the opportunity—and obligation—to work together.

"We need to bridge the divide," said Peter Bance, Countryside Alliance president and founder.

The NNLC is proud to do its part.

Lawrence Latané is president of the Northern Neck Land Conservancy and grows certified-organic produce at his Westmoreland County farm, Blenheim Organic Gardens.

ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY:
A WALKING TOUR OF TAPPAHANNOCK

by Suzanne Derieux

Captain John Smith explored this area during the fall and winter of 1608, and was taken by a group of natives to a village nearabouts called Topahanocke. In his early maps he kept the Amerindian name, meaning something like "rise and fall of water," for this river, the modern version coming down as Rappahannock.

The first name found for the 1660s English trading post/settlement here was Hobbs His Hole, or just Hobbs Hole. In 1680 a township was required in every county, and Thomas Goodrich offered fifty acres located on the river. First called New Plymouth, the town had become Tappahannock by 1705. A plat done by Harry Beverley in 1705–1706 shows the fifty acres set off in two-acre blocks. Still in use are the original street names; Marsh, Queen, Prince, and Duke, all running east to the river, and Water, Cross, and Church, running north-south.

The settlement was small and sparse until the county's courthouse was ordered to be built here in 1728, and one of the official tobacco warehouses in 1730. There was strong growth until the Revolution, after which the town entered into a decline, which continued all the way to World War I. A second building boom began in the 1920s, with Wakefield and Tanyard farms turned into housing developments, and river cottages becoming popular. Large commercial development began in the 1970s, when the businesses downtown began to move to shopping centers.

Start the tour at the Essex County Museum on Water Lane. The museum is housed in the colonial revival Maddox building, built by Susie Warner Maddox in the mid-1930s. Adjoining the museum is the Blake-Brockenbrough Cemetery, established in 1831 by the will of Benjamin Blake. He, his wife, Elizabeth; their daughter, Frances; and her husband, Dr. Austin

Brockenbrough, are all interred here. Six of the nine Brockenbrough children are also here, including Captain Austin Brockenbrough, 55th Va. Inf. C. S. A. He was twenty-one when he was killed at Gettysburg.

On the corner of Queen and Water, look to the left and see the 1890s folk Victorian house built as the parsonage for Centennial Baptist Church. Across the street is is the Greek revival Farland-Gresham house. It was built in 1856 as a duplex (house and store) by Zebulon S. Farland, a local merchant, and was later owned by Anne Brooke Mallory, and then the Gresham family. The porch is 1890s, and more recent renovations have disturbed the original style.

Turn right and pass by the Handy store and look at the building in Greek revival style, with the tall columns, built in the early 1930s for the Rappahannock College of William and Mary. There were several of these branch colleges, started by William and Mary President J. A. C. Chandler to help with continuing education during the Depression. One of these, the Norfolk College of William and Mary, became Old Dominion, and the Richmond Professional Institute of William and Mary became Virginia Commonwealth University. The Rappahannock College branch was not successful and closed in 1936.

As you walk toward the river, on the right is the town park. To get to the river, either go down the steps to the right of the bridge, or cross the highway and walk under. There have been two bridges here. The first opened in 1927 and was named for state Senator Thomas J. Downing. Its successor was opened in 1963 and named for Thomas N. Downing, nephew to Thomas J. This shoreline was once teaming with ships, fishing boats, and travelers. The old wharf was destroyed by the Chesapeake Hurricane in 1933, and the remaining pylons are from the 1934 wharf. Several ferries plied this shore, the first established in 1764. It and its successors stayed in continuous operation until the opening of the first bridge. The sidewalk to the left of the wharf is what remains of the last landing, which ran to Ferry Farm in Richmond County. The house on the hill is Willowgreen, built in 1914 by Henry C. DeShields, the first elected mayor of Tappahannock.

Coming up Prince Street, you'll see the Customs House, a vernacular-style brick house on the right. Archibald Ritchie, a Scottish merchant, lived there from the 1750s to 1768. When the Leeds Town Sons of Liberty confronted Ritchie in 1766, they did so at this house. Lawrence Muse, who was the collector of

Customs House

customs for the Port of Tappahannock, bought it from the Ritchie heirs and lived there for over forty years, giving the house its name. After Muse, the house was owned by Col. John A. Parker, who served as counsel to Hawaii, and as librarian for the US House of Representatives. Allen D. Latane, editor and publisher of the Rappahannock Times and clerk of the circuit court, owned the house from the 1930s to 1950s. This is an unusual building, having five levels. The house originally ended at the chimney, but was later extended. The small wing is also a later addition. The bottom step of the front porch is from an old printing press Allen D. Latane owned.

Next up the street, to the right, is a large Greek revival house, built in two parts. The left side under the A-frame roof was built in 1848 by James Muscoe Matthews. The flat-roof side was added in the 1870s. The building is often (mistakenly) called the Scots Arms Tavern, which had been built on this lot by 1710 and lasted until all the tavern buildings burned in the early 1830s. In the backyard is the second oldest extant gravestone found, so far, in Essex: that of John Govane, who died on a ship at this port in 1728 and was buried on the Scots Arms Tavern lot.

There are three folk Victorians, one on the right, two on the left, all built between 1890 and 1907. The DAW Theatre is the second theatre on this site. The first burned in 1949. The name DAW comes from the initials of the surnames of the three men who developed the business; Doar, Atkinson, and Wallace.

McCall-Brockenbrough House

The McCall-Brockenbrough House has Georgian stylings and was either built or improved upon by Archibald McCall.

Turning left on Water Lane, you come to Emerson's Ordinary, one of the oldest extant buildings in the county. A frame vernacular in style, it was built as one room and a passage. The second room was added later, as was the back. It has been an ordinary, an apothecary shop, and a family home. Dr. Thomas Gordon owned it before the War, and the youngest of his seventeen children lived here until they were old enough to move to his main house. The house was later owned by the Brockenbroughs and the Henleys.

Continuing on Water Lane, and crossing Duke Street, you will see, to the left, St. Margaret's School, founded in 1921 by the Diocese of Virginia. Three historic buildings are owned by the school, none of them open to the public. The first house on the left, backing onto the river, is the Anderton House, possibly built by Robert Coleman in the early eighteenth century as his "prize house," the place where the tobacco was prized into hogsheads for shipping. The house was later owned by Dr. John Brockenbrough, a naval surgeon in the Revolution. Other owners include the Hipkins, McDaniel, and Anderton families. The diocese bought it in 1947. The original house, a frame vernacular, consisted of a parlor and passage with a boxed staircase. The second story was enlarged in the nineteenth century, the south wing added in the 1890s and the north in the 1970s.

The McCall-Brockenbrough House has Georgian stylings and was either built or improved upon by Archibald McCall, one of the many Scottish merchants and factors who came here for the tobacco trade in the mid-eighteenth century. As a Scottish citizen, he remained a loyal subject of the king and pledged to support the Stamp Act passed by the British government. He was beaten (some accounts say tarred and feathered) by the Leeds Town Sons of Liberty in February 1766, on their trip to Tappahannock. His wife was said to be so horrified she never recovered, and she died in January 1767. Some think her ghost haunts the home, and the students call her the "gray lady."

The Brockenbrough family bought the property in 1812 and owned it until 1923, when the diocese bought it. The small room on the back was added by Annie Mason Brockenbrough as her personal chapel. The house has beautiful paneling, possibly done by same craftsman who did Gunston Hall. Out on the lawn is a Cedar of Lebanon, called Bishop Meade's Tree, planted while he was on a visit to the Brockenbroughs.

The Gordon-Wright house, now St. Margaret's Hall, was built by Dr. Thomas Gordon in Greek revival style in the 1840s. Built in frame style, it has four rooms over four, with a wide center passage, English basement, four end chimneys, and double-height porches overlooking the river front. This was where Dr. Gordon and his wife lived with their older children, keeping his younger ones down at Emerson's Ordinary. The farm, which stretched from the Brockenbrough line to Hoskin's Creek and from the river to (now) Essex Street, was purchased by Judge Thomas Roane Barnes Wright in 1876 and renamed Racefield. The Diocese of Virginia bought the house in 1921 to use as the first building for St. Margaret's School. The diocese added the wings in 1923, and the one-story extensions were added in 1944 and 1975, respectively. A small cemetery for the Gordon family lies in front of Latane Hall dormitory, located further down the street.

Turning back toward Prince Street, you'll see, on the corner of Water and Duke Streets, the largest of the town's Greek revival houses, built in the 1850s by Dr. Lawrence A. W. Roane. Built according to the same plan as the Gordon House, this one has stucco over brick and single-story porches. It was later owned by Judge Thomas Croxton, and Moore Brockenbrough Wright, a local merchant, and the Trible family. It is now a bed and breakfast known as the Essex Inn.

Across and down Duke Street is St. John's Church. The Rev. John Peyton McGuire, called the "apostle of the Rappahannock," was responsible for the restoration of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this county in the early nineteenth century. Under his leadership, two new churches were built: St. Paul's Church (1837–1838), and St. John's, built between 1849 and 1851. St. John's is one of four gothic revival buildings in the county. The church has a board and batten exterior, with lancet windows, "pencil point" towers, and a Tiffany Studio window. The Rev. McGuire and his second wife, Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, authoress of Diary of a Southern Refugee are buried here, as are Judge T. R. B. Wright; his son, Congressman William A. Wright; author William S. Albaugh; and circuit court clerks James Roy Micou and Allen D. Latane.

As you look west on Duke Street, across the highway, you'll see a brick building, now owned by Modern Cleaners. This was the Tappahannock Chapel, or Free Church, begun in 1820. Four denominations would worship here every month, on different Sundays: first, Episcopalians; second, Baptists; third, Methodists;

Greek Revival Courthouse

and forth, Presbyterians. It later became a granary, and the first town hall, and the first movie house before World War I.

Head back to Prince Street, where the building on the southwest corner currently houses the Tappahannock Art Guild. Somewhere underneath all the alterations and additions is the R. L. Pitts store, ca. 1840, later owned by W. W. Stone. W. J. Reamy put on the third story with the Mansard roof in 1895 and opened the building as the Bagby Hotel. It housed the Essex 5¢ & 10¢ Store from the 1950s to the 1970s.

On the north side of the street, all the buildings, save the Ritchie House, were built after June 1917, when a fire started in what was Henley's Drugstore and spread quickly. The town had no fire equipment, so the locals formed a bucket brigade from the river, barely keeping the fire from jumping streets and taking the entire town.

The Ritchie House, on the corner of Prince and Cross Streets, is the last of three houses connected by walkways that stretched along the entire block in the eighteenth century. Possibly built by James Mills, a Scottish merchant, the entire two-acre block was bought by Archibald Ritchie in 1768. In 1820 the buildings were split up, William B. Matthews buying the Ritchie

Confederate War Memorial

House as his home, and the other two becoming first a tavern and later, the Union Hotel, renamed the Farmers Hotel. Sometime in the 1870s they were torn down, and wooden stores built, replaced by brick after the 1917 fire. The four buildings in the center of the block all have an overhang of Spanish colonial tiles popular in the 1920s, which are actually galvanized tin tiles painted red.

The Matthews house passed through several owners, was restored by Alexander F. Dillard, and is now used by the law firm of Dillard and Katona. Tidewater vernacular in style, built of bricks arranged in Flemish bond with glazed headers, the house has clipped gables, and end chimneys. The wood paneling is new but follows the design of the original, which was sold to the Winterthur Museum in the 1930s. The additions to the side and back are new.

The courthouse green contains the following buildings, starting on the corner of Prince and Cross Streets:

- The fountain was given to the town in 1949 by Ella Ball Bowley in honor of Ella Gresham Haile and Alfred I. DuPont.
- The small brick building next to the fountain and done in Flemish bond with glazed headers served as the court clerk's office and record room from 1808 until 1848. A 1929 renovation by the DuPonts added the back wing, both chimneys, and upper windows. The building was loaned to the Women's Club of Essex in 1939 and has served as their headquarters ever since.
- The current circuit courthouse was built 1847–1848 in the Greek revival style, of brick in Flemish bond, and cost $5,900. Another DuPont gift in 1925 added the clock tower and bell. Judge T. R. B. Wright began the custom of honoring local men of note with portraits in this and other courthouses, and Essex had one of the largest collections in Virginia. Over thirty of them were lost in the 1965 fire that gutted the courtroom. Fortunately, the records, dating back to the 1650s, were not harmed.
- The small building next up the street was a debtors' prison, built in the 1760s. It has been used for storage, offices, and is now used by the county treasurer. Note the well-worn stoop. The tiny room upstairs was used as a schoolroom in the 1880s.
- The old courthouse on the corner of Queen and Church Streets was built in 1728 for tobacco in cask worth £43,000. Built in Flemish bond, with glazed headers, the building once had sash windows and dormers. The 1774 trial of three Baptist preachers for "preaching and expounding the scripture contrary to law," or rather, outside the state Anglican Church, was held here. They paid their fines and promised to be of good behavior for one year. This building was partly burned by the British in 1814, when they looted the town. It was rebuilt in 1815. After the current courthouse was built, the old courthouse was used as a granary and warehouse. It was bought by a group of Baptists led by Rev. Frank Brown Beale in 1878, and named Centennial Baptist Church. The nave and belfry were added in 1881. It was renamed Beale Memorial Church in 1908 to honor Rev. Beale.

Essex has two war memorials. The first, in the center of Prince Street, was dedicated in 1909 to those who fought in Confederate service during the War between the States. The money for it was raised by the Daughters of the Confederacy. The second memorial is located on the courthouse green off Cross Street and was dedicated in November 2009 "in Honor of All Those Born in

Essex County Who Served Our County." It was donated by Joseph Latane Ware and his wife, Helen.

The Bareford Building (1949) on the southeast corner of Prince and Church is one of Tappahannock's three commercial buildings in art moderne style. This style is noted for its long streamlined curves, and use of translucent glass bricks.

Crossing Church Lane (carefully), you come to the second of Tappahannock's art moderne buildings. It was built as a service station, and became an Esso station in 1946. The third building is further down Church Lane and houses Acme Antiques. It was originally built for a car dealership.

Continuing up Prince Street, you'll find are three folk Victorians on the right. The forth building on the right is federal in style. It was built before 1820 and was owned successively between 1810 and 1882 by Robert Weir, Winter Bray, and Richard Croxton, all merchants in town. Next to it is Little Greenway, built by W. W. Dillard in the 1890s in folk Victorian style. Bought by Judge Thomas E. Blakey in 1901, it stayed in his family until 1966. The back addition was put on in the 1990s.

Across the street is The Sycamores. The original house under the additions is colonial, built before 1800. It was the home of Thomas Croxton, and Dr. Logan Robinson, and was owned by the Wright family for over 100 years.

Further up Prince Street, just past where the road changes to Faulconer Circle, on the right, is Little Egypt. James Griffing had an ordinary there in the mid-eighteenth century. It was later owned by James Roy Micou, clerk of the Essex County Court from 1839 to 1887, and then by the Faulconer family. The house is a frame vernacular in style, built as one room with a passage, the second room added later. It has a narrow boxed staircase and three small rooms upstairs.

Little Egypt

There are other interesting houses and building styles throughout Wakefield and Tanyard, and several interesting small cemeteries on the upper end of Wueen Street. All are worth further explorations.

Sites

1. Where the Riverside Condominium now stands was the site of the Dobyns House. Built in the 1840s, it was a Greek revival house with a two-story porch that faced the river. In the 1890s a wing was added to make the home into a boarding house/ hotel. It became the Riverside Hotel in the early twentieth century, and with regular steamboat service to Baltimore and Norfolk, became a well-known "watering place." The food was good and the hotel offered bathing, boat rental, fishing, and crabbing. It stayed in business until the early 1970s, when it was torn down.
2. The District Court building stands on the site of Monument Place. A brick Tidewater vernacular, it was built before the Revolution. It was owned by Francis Taliaferro Brooke, Dr. Ewen Clements, and Dr. Thomas B. W. Gray. In 1818 Dr. Gray's widow, Mrs. Lucy Wellford Gray, open a school for girls that lasted until 1861. She added a large frame section on the side and the back. The building became the Virginia Hotel in 1871, operating (and failing) under several different owners until 1907, when the Gresham sisters took it over. They made a success of the hotel, which they renamed Monument Place. The hotel closed in 1945, and the building went back to being a family home. It was sold to the county in 1968, and demolished in 1970.

Suzanne Derieux was born, raised, and currently resides in Tappahannock, VA. She was graduated from St. Margaret's School in Tappahannock and Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg. She is a professional genealogist, and can be often found doing research in the Essex County Courthouse. She has co-compiled (with Wesley Pippenger) two books on *Essex County Cemeteries: Volume 1–County Church Cemeteries* and *Volume 2–Tappahannock Cemeteries*. In her spare time, she enjoys refereeing women's lacrosse and field hockey at the high school and collegiate level.

Tim Holmes and Postmaster Maurice Beazly in front of the Minor store.

A Bygone Era

Minor Store | Minor, Virginia

by Hylah Haile Boyd

There are few traces now of the building that was Minor Store, but there was a time when it was the center of community life. Some referred to it as the Minor Country Club. While the store was just across the county boundary line in King & Queen County, it served mainly Essex County residents. It was the post office, local store, and community gathering place.

Minor residents timed their daily visits to the store for midmorning to pick up their mail. At that time they could count on seeing other neighbors also there for their mail. Maurice Beazley, the postmaster and general clerk, lived at the store, on the second story. He was there day and night, six days a week. His hot meals were made by Woodley Broaddus Acree from Cherry Walk and brought to the store, in a covered dish, by her husband, Sam Acree, who owned the store. Early morning customers waited patiently while Maurice took ten minutes to put up the mail and midmorning customers gave Maurice time to eat his delivered meal.

The store was warmed in the winter by a potbelly stove and cooled in the summer to the extent possible by breezes through the large, screened, front door to the screened back door. In the summer, it was a common sight to see farm workers sitting on benches on the covered front porch, eating their lunch of sardines, crackers, and RC cola.

The last Minor resident to drive a horse and buggy to the store was Mrs. Robert Gaines Haile, who lived at nearby Retreat Farm. The last Minor farmer to work his fields with a team of horses was Tim Holmes, who once played a hoax on the community. He nailed a twelve-foot stalk of corn at the front of the store. Days later, when someone noticed that one half of the stalk was drying faster than the other half, close inspection revealed

that Tim had joined two stalks of corn together at a growth joint.

The store sold gasoline. It was hand-pumped to a glass top so customers could see their purchase. Gravity allowed the gas to run into the car. The only water to be had at the store was from a hand-pumped well. Candy bars were five cents apiece. If you wanted cheese or baloney, Maurice would take his knife and cut a thick slice from the wheel of cheese or baloney log. There was no adding machine. Maurice used a lead pencil and scrap paper from the cheese wheel to tally the purchases. Maybe it was the sales tax that put the store out of business!

Cream from milk cows was collected in metal cream cans—maybe one per farm—which were picked up weekly from the store's front porch, before daybreak, by a dairy. When business was slow, Maurice performed odd jobs for neighbors. He built pasture gates for nearby Elton Farm. He collected black walnuts from Cherry Walk and patiently cracked the shells to fill jars of nuts. He was frequently seen shelling peas for others.

Area farmers were Jack Acree, Oscar Porter Alexander, Irvin Booker, Johnnie Brooks, John Cowles, John Haile, Charlie Holmes, Tim Holmes, Richmond Lane, Tom Longest, and Thomas Pollard. The blacksmith was William Greenstreet.

Bill-o Acree was a Vo-Ag pupil of John Cowles at nearby Marriot High School, but they did not share a close student/teacher relationship. Bill-o would circle behind the potbellied stove whenever Mr. Cowles came into the store. Interestingly, Bill-o later became the Vo-Ag teacher at Marriot.

Every Saturday evening the neighborhood men gathered at the store to shoot the breeze and play cards. When time came to close the store Saturday night, Maurice was driven to Cherry Walk, where he spent the night and Sundays over a garage adjacent to the house. Early Monday morning, he was back at the store.

Mr. David Moore and his daughter Shirley Johnson standing in front of a DUK.

An example of how close the Minor community was came on a Saturday night at the store when David Moore, a WWII veteran who had spent three years in the South Pacific driving a DUK (amphibious vehicle), asked for help. His proud parents had saved all three years of his military paychecks, unopened, so David bought land one-quarter mile from the store, where he built a house. However, a shyster in the home repair business swindled David out of ownership of his house. When the group confronted the shyster, he was never seen in the neighborhood again.

A former resident of Minor remembers the store fondly and compares it to Varner's Store in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi. Minor was a tight community where information flowed, friendships flourished, and neighborly feelings abounded. When the post office closed and a star route was established for mail delivery (star route, as opposed to a rural route, we were told, meant the person delivering the mail had not passed the postal exam), the community hub ceased to exist. An era passed.

Hylah Haile Boyd John R. Haile

Born and raised in Minor, Virginia, Hylah Haile Boyd became aware of the beauty in nature, growing up at 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. She founded Scenic Virginia in 1998, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing the Commonwealth's most important and historically significant vistas.

The following is an ode to Minor Store written by Mary Virginia Haile, 1898–1972.

"My Old Post Office Is Gone"

The old post office was down the way,
but the distance won't too far.
Some trod the road to get their mail,
some drove the car.

But the old post office is now no more.
The times have changed the mode.
I get my mail from a metal box
on a post beside the road.

With my old post office is gone, likewise,
the country store with its merchandise,
The keg of nails, the Red Mule Chew,
and peppermint sticks are just a few.

And the old drum stove we sat around
on a cold, raw, winter day,
and the summer porch we rested on,
after we'd spent our pay.

I miss it all, but I tell you what
I miss more than all the rest,
It's the talk I heard from the men who came
'cause that's what I liked the best.
It's the talk I hear from the men who came
that I miss more than all the rest.

The ladies, they sometimes dropped in,
but the men would quiet down
and us that listened would sit and wait
'til they took themselves away.

They came for their mail, old men and young,
and their talking was something to hear.
The farmers, the schoolman, the captain, and doc
they was mostly in pretty high gear.

But they joked the postmaster and made us a part
of that gathering of menfolks right from the start.
They talked of psychology, 'ligion and such
and us bashful and timid ones took in right much.

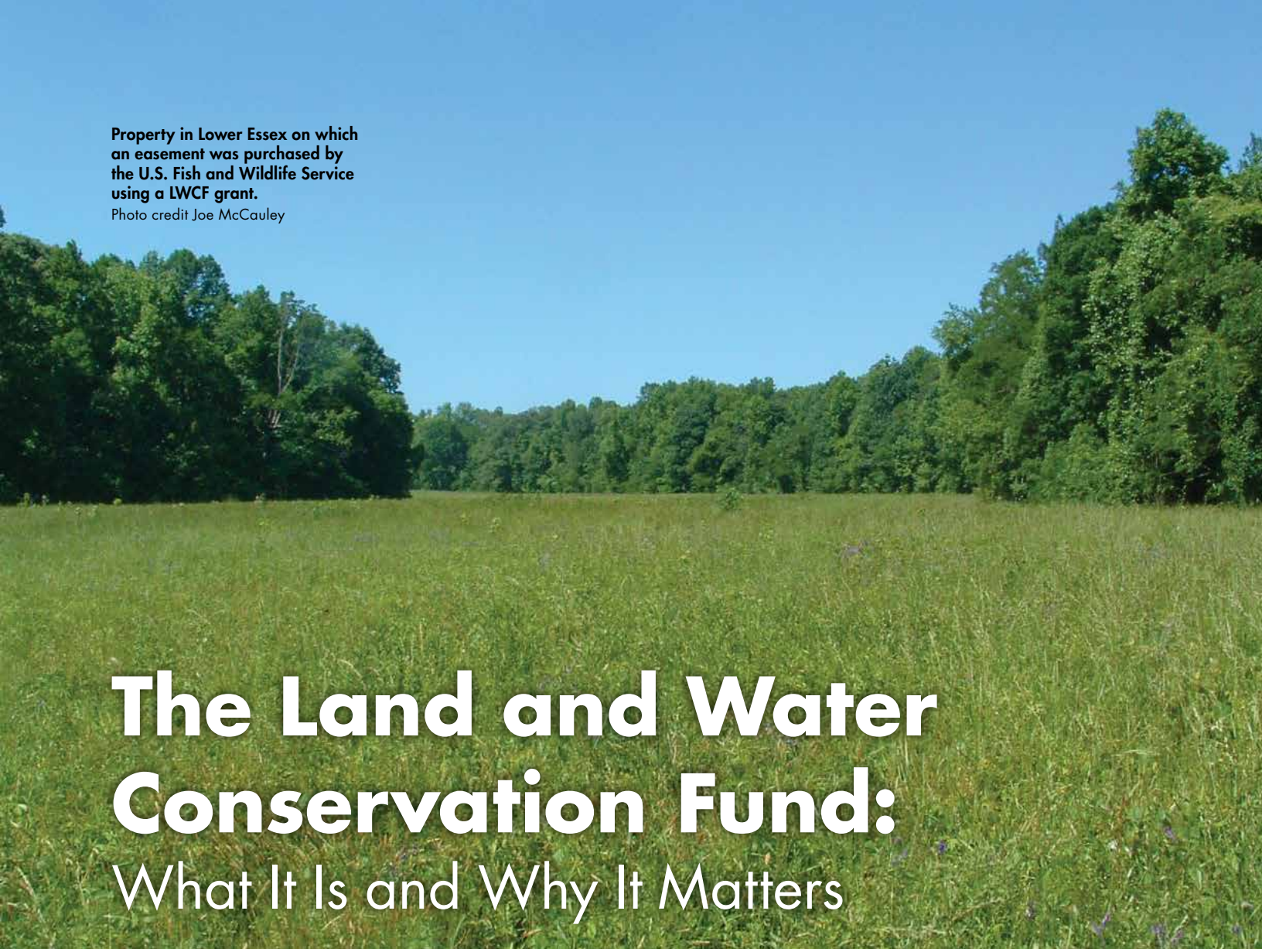
They argued philosophy and love of your brother.
They fired up sometimes and couldn't get together.
But what ever they talked of, this I do know,
I won't hear the like of it ever no more.

The politics they thrashed up there
could have run this country fine.
And the talk on health and rumatiz
was physics to my mind.

They left out gossip the women put in
when they whisper together 'bout other folks' sin.
The subjects they covered was worth a big fee
and long as I live will give learning to me.

The old post office ain't no more.
The times have changed the mode.
I get my mail from a metal box
on a post beside the road.

That ain't so bad for it takes less walk,
and I'm growing old and blind.
But I still hear good and the talk I miss
has left a gap in this old man's life
since the old post office is gone.



Property in Lower Essex on which an easement was purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service using a LWCF grant.
Photo credit Joe McCauley

The Land and Water Conservation Fund: What It Is and Why It Matters

by Hylah Haile Boyd

What Is It?

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was created by Congress in 1964 as a bipartisan commitment to safeguard our country's premier natural areas and to provide recreational opportunities for all Americans. The LWCF has been America's most important funding tool for over fifty years to conserve irreplaceable lands and waters. National parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, community parks, local trails, and ball fields in every one of our fifty states have been set aside for Americans to enjoy.

How Is It Funded?

The LWCF takes a portion of the offshore oil and gas royalties energy companies pay the government for drilling into the publicly owned Outer Continental Shelf. It seems reasonable that when companies deplete a publicly owned finite natural resource, they dedicate a portion of their revenues to strengthen the rest of our nation's natural assets. Congress designed the LWCF this way so there would be money available without burdening the taxpayer. Using zero taxpayer dollars, the LWCF invests revenue from the offshore oil and gas leasing to acquire the lands and waters to achieve federal, state, and local natural, cultural, wildlife, and recreation management objectives.

Why Is It Important?

Over its fifty-year history, the LWCF has protected more than five million acres of land and supported over 41,000 state and local park projects. The LWCF is a benefit to the overall health and economic strength of local communities. Hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation activities contribute billions,

Belle Isle State Park Visitor's Center in Lancaster County. The Center was completed using LWCF grants.
Photo credit Virginia State Parks/Belle Isle State Park

Belle Isle State Park

annually, to the economy and support vital outdoor recreation and tourism industries. These outdoor industries supply one of every twenty jobs in the United States and stimulate 8 percent of all consumer spending, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation. The LWCF supports the revitalization of local communities and attracts other kinds of funding. Over the life of the program, more than $3 billion in LWCF grants to states has leveraged more than $7 billion in matching funds, according to the Wilderness Society 's website.

How Are LWCF Grants Distributed?

At the federal level, the US Treasury distributes LWCF grants to the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service. It has been used to protect land as varied as national forests and historic battlefields.

The LWCF also funds a matching grant program to assist states in recreational planning, acquiring recreational lands and waters, and developing outdoor recreational facilities. The states award their grant money through a competitive selection process. The LWCF leads to the creation and protection of community parks, walking trails, and neighborhood ball fields.

In Virginia the LWCF is administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) on behalf of the National Park Service. It is a fifty-fifty matching reimbursement program, which means the grant recipient must be able to fund 100 percent of the project while seeking periodic reimbursements. Virginia has received more than $76 million since the LWCF began, which has made more than 400 projects possible. In addition to state agencies, eligible applicants include cities, towns, counties, Native American tribes, and regional park authorities. Properties acquired, improved, or developed with LWCF assistance must remain open, maintained, and operated in perpetuity for public outdoor recreation.

Essex County has not received LWCF grants for county parks and ball fields, unlike Caroline and Middlesex Counties, although the federal Fish and Wildlife Service acquired funds from the program for the Hutchison Track and to purchase a conservation easement on a property in Lower Essex. In addition to Caroline and Middlesex, the other surrounding counties benefitting from the LWCF are Gloucester, King George, Lancaster, Mathews, and Westmoreland. Also the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Richmond County and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail have received grants.

Photo credit Bill Crabtree, Jr.

Pocahontas State Park

What Is the Current Status of the LWCF?

The LWCF is authorized to receive up to $900 million per year in royalties paid by energy companies. However, Congress has fully funded the LWCF only once and has never adjusted its funding for inflation. Congress habitually raids a portion of the funds for other uses and, in fact, briefly let the program lapse in 2015. A groundswell of bipartisan support emerged and the program was extended three years. Even so, appropriations for federal and state grants have ranged from $149 million to $573 million, far short of the authorized amount of $900 million. This has often led to inadequate funding for vital conservation projects. If fully funded, the program would comprise only 11.5 percent of all oil and gas revenues.

Photo credit Joe McCauley

Fishing pier/canoe launch at the Hutchison Tract in Essex, part of the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. The marsh portion was purchased with Duck Stamp funds, the upland with LWCF.

Photo credit Middlesex County

Middlesex County Sports Complex completed using LWCF grants.

What Is the Future of the LWCF?

The LWCF is set to expire on October 1, 2018, unless Congress reauthorizes it. There are several bills pending to not only extend the program but to permanently reauthorize the LWCF so it is not subject to the ebb and flow of Congressional support. A pair of bipartisan bills was introduced in the 115th Congress. Senate Bill 896 was introduced by Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) and Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) to permanently reauthorize the LWCF. A similar bill was introduced by

Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) to permanently reauthorize the LWCF and to provide for full, dedicated, and permanent funding. This would stop the LWCF's funding from being siphoned off each year in the appropriations process for other, unknown and unaccountable purposes.

Conclusion

Despite inadequate funding over the years, the LWCF remains the premier federal program to conserve our nation's irreplaceable lands and improve outdoor recreational opportunities. By voting to fully reauthorize the fund, Congress would ensure that future generations have access to healthy green spaces, parks, trails, and places to watch wildlife. The program has worked for over fifty years without costing the taxpayers a dime and could work for another fifty years.

The message below, from the National Park Service, summarizes the long-term benefits of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The National Park Service | US Department of the Interior
Land and Water Conservation Fund | State and Local Assistance Program
Annual Report 2012 (the latest report available on the website)

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND THEIR NATURAL ECONOMIC ASSETS

I am pleased to share the National Park Service's annual report on the accomplishments of our Land and Water Conservation Fund's State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF) for fiscal year 2012. This year's report highlights some of the ways in which the LWCF Program supports the economies of state and local governments that have partnered with the NPS to invest in acquiring and developing parks and other outdoor recreation facilities. In fiscal year 2012, the NPS awarded $42,051,200 in grants for parks in 314 communities. These grant dollars helped leverage an additional $48,198,287 in state, local, and private dollars as match.

Many understand the health and social benefits parks provide, such as improving fitness, enhancing the quality of the environment, and helping families and neighbors connect with one another. Another significant benefit derived from parks is their role as economic drivers, making them community assets in every sense of the term. Direct economic benefits include supporting a variety of local businesses through spending by park visitors, creating jobs and income for residents, and enhancing property values of nearby homes; all of which generate revenue for the communities near the parks. Indirectly, parks can help lower health care costs and the expense of constructing public infrastructure like storm water management systems. Even better, the land protection provisions of the LWCF ensure that assisted parks will provide these benefits to future generations of Americans.

This report highlights some of our best work in 2012. On behalf of all Americans, we pledge to do even more in the years ahead.

Jonathan B. Jarvis, Director
National Park Service

Sources: US Department of the Interior, US National Park Service, Wilderness Society, Garden Club of America, LWCF Coalition, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Chesapeake Conservancy and Virginia State Parks.

Blandfield, first property listed on the registers for Essex County in 1969.

Edenetta, most recently listed individual property–listed in 2016.

Historic Landmarks Registers in Virginia

by Elizabeth Lipford

Not one, but two registers of historic properties are administered by the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Historic Resources (DHR). The Virginia Landmark Register and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) were both established in 1966, one by an act of the Virginia General Assembly and the other by an act of Congress. These two independent registers serve the shared goal of recognizing the places that are important to the history of Virginia and to the nation.

Why Two Registers?

The 1960s was a time of rapid, widespread development along several national fronts including infrastructure, military expansion and urban "renewal" initiatives. As these unfolded, Virginia moved in step with a growing national realization that many important historic landmarks were being lost to large-scale development projects, such as the creation of a federal highway system. In early 1966, the Commonwealth established the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission (VHLC) to identify, evaluate, and list on an official Virginia Landmarks Register all the significant buildings, sites, and historic districts associated with Virginia's history. Months later, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act, which established the NRHP and placed it under the auspices of the National Park Service (NPS).

The federal legislation also mandated that each state create a state historic preservation office to administer its official list of historic landmarks. In Virginia, that job naturally fell to the newly established VHLC. With foresight, Virginia made the wise decision to use the NRHP criteria for evaluating and listing properties to the Virginia Landmarks Register. As a result, the same evaluation criteria as well as the same nomination form allow nomination of a property to both registers simultaneously. Meanwhile, during the fifty-plus years since the creation of the two registers, the VHLC has evolved into the present-day DHR. Despite these changes, the DHR's charge remains the same: to identify, evaluate, and list those properties that are significant to Virginia's history.

What Does Listing on These Registers Mean for Private Property Owners?

Interestingly, despite over fifty years of effort and nearly 3,000 register-listed properties (including historic districts) in Virginia, there remain some misunderstandings of what state and national historic designation mean and don't mean for property owners. For instance, people often assume that designation comes with "rules," which is not the case. Designating a property to the state and national registers places no restrictions

Photo credits Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District, Home Lea

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District, Post Office at Midway

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District, Trible House

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District, Adams House

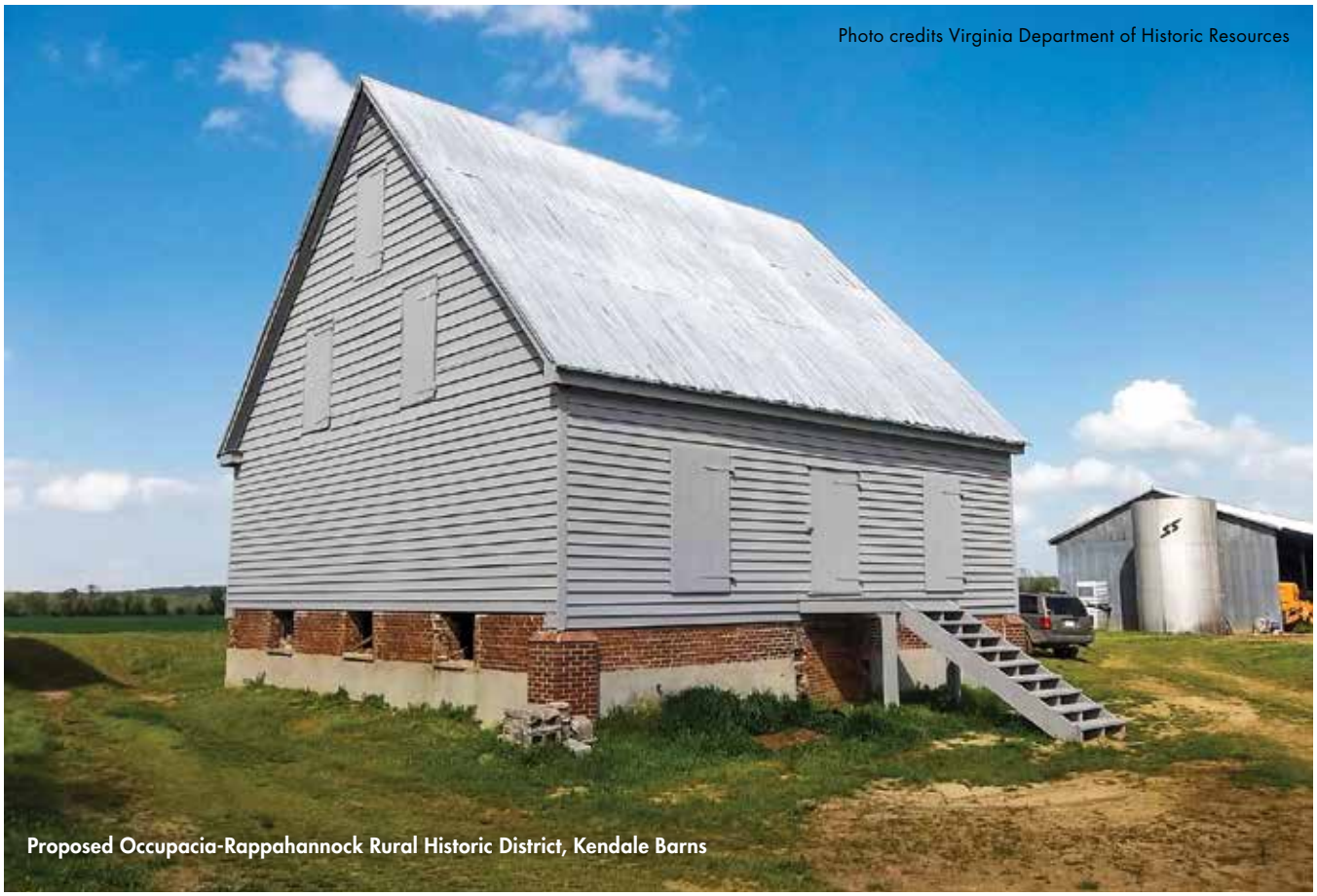
The National Historic Preservation Act, which created the NRHP, also requires federal agencies or those receiving federal funds, to take into account the impact of their undertakings on historic resources.

on private property owners using private funds to improve or alter their property. Confusion about such restrictions may arise because many localities in Virginia have local historic designation zoning that does include some level of review of exterior changes to buildings. Although the DHR encourages localities to establish local zoning for historic properties, it is important to know that these local processes are separate and apart from the designations of the state and national registers. Some of the most frequent questions of DHR staff regarding designation include: Will the DHR have to review changes to my property? Does it require me to restore my property? Do I have to open my property to the public? Will it change my property value or insurance premiums? Will anyone be able to stop me if I want to demolish my historic resource? The answer to all of these questions is no.

So, Why Is It Important?

Created to be the "honor roll" of historic sites in Virginia, these registers are a way to recognize the tangible evidence of our rich and diverse history. Yet much more than an honor roll, the designation brings with it all the resources and programs available to property owners through the DHR and the NPS. Virginia programs tied to the Virginia Landmark Register offer property owners the potential to donate a historic preservation easement on their property to the Commonwealth or to receive tax credits for rehabilitations carried out according to specific standards to protect a property's historic integrity. Both of these programs—easements and tax credits—recognize that preserving or rehabilitating a historic property can entail extra costs for owners who care about a site's legacy and stewardship. To offset those costs, these programs

Photo credits Virginia Department of Historic Resources



Proposed Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District, Kendale Barns

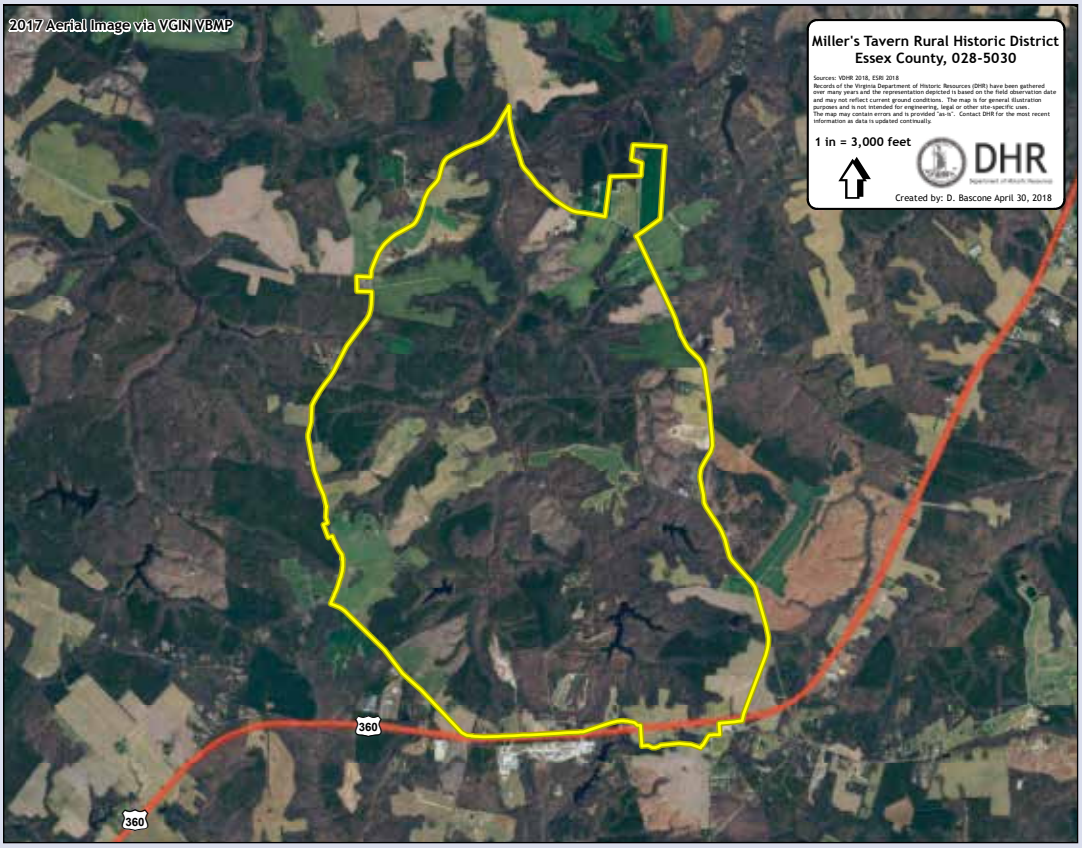
offer financial benefits to the owners of eligible or listed historic properties. At the federal level, listing on the NRHP provides access to a federal rehabilitation tax credit program. Furthermore, NRHP listing is often the first eligibility requirement for various NPS grants for historic properties. Additionally, DHR staff in three regional offices as well as the main Richmond office are always available to provide technical assistance to owners of listed properties, including consultation on best practices for preservation and on potential archaeological resources on their property.

The benefits of listing on the registers also extend beyond private individuals to the entire community. Nomination reports include detailed analysis and descriptions of historic resources along with scholarly research narratives that serve as educational tools. For example, nominations for historic districts often become the catalysts for local initiatives such as walking tours or interpretive signage in a community. Additionally, the designation of a historic district involves public meetings and information sessions that draw attention to a locality's history and engage members of the community in learning about their history. The identification and evaluation process also serves as a planning tool for local

Proposed Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District, Enon Baptist Church

Proposed Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District, Epping Forest

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District



Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District study area

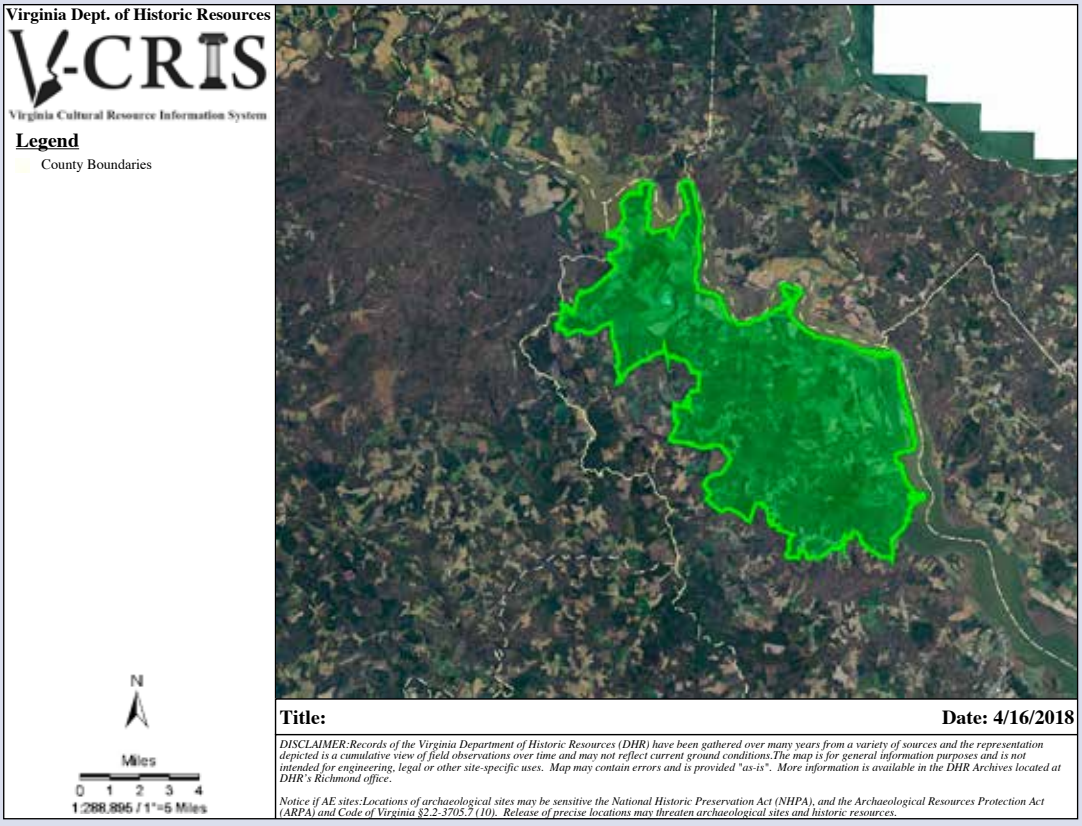



Photo credits Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Little Egypt, Tappahannock, DHR determined it eligible for listing in 2007.

governments, as well as state and federal agencies. The National Historic Preservation Act, which created the NRHP, also requires federal agencies or those receiving federal funds, to take into account the impact of their undertakings on historic resources. This allows for consultation during the planning stage with the intent of avoiding, reducing, or mitigating adverse effects on historic properties. This is a limited protection that encourages improved project design. The focused review does not stop a project but, hopefully, can protect valuable historic resources and culturally significant landscapes.

Millers Tavern Rural Historic District, Beulah Baptist Church

Essex County and the ECCA: Leaders in Recognizing Historic Resources!

Essex County has been quite involved in the identification, evaluation, and nomination process for the past five to six years, with the ECCA as a primary catalyst for action. In 2013, the DHR, with Essex County's participation, undertook a countywide survey to identify potentially significant rural historic districts. (A rural historic district differs from an urban or town district in that it often has a large geographical coverage that captures historic land uses interconnected by such things as roads, waterways, landscapes, and settlement patterns.)

The ECCA generously provided the county's portion of the matching funds for the 2013 project, with in-kind services donated by the county government. The DHR provided the other half of the funds through the statewide Cost-Share Survey grant program. The survey identified two eligible rural historic districts: Millers Tavern Rural Historic District and Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District. Millers Tavern Rural Historic District proceeded to nomination, due to the volunteer efforts of ECCA members, and was listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the NRHP in 2017. Now, during the upcoming 2018–2019 state fiscal year, the DHR will embark on another cost-share grant project with Essex County to record the majority of

REGISTERED PROPERTIES IN ESSEX COUNTY

- Blandfield
- Brooke's Bank
- Cherry Walk
- Edenetta
- Elmwood
- Glebe of St. Anne's Parish
- Glencairn
- Linden
- Millers Tavern Rural Historic District
- Mount Verde
- Port Micou
- St. Matthew's Church
- Tappahannock Historic District
- Vauter's Church
- Wheatland
- Woodlawn

resources in the eligible Occupacia-Rappahannock Rural Historic District. As in 2013, it will proceed under the authority of a joint agreement between the DHR and Essex County, with the ECCA providing the matching funds for the grant. A hired professional consultant will photograph approximately 300 properties in the study area and enter information into the DHR's Virginia Cultural Resources Inventory System (VCRIS) database. This is the first step toward having the historic district officially listed on the registers. It is anticipated that the project will be completed during a second phase of funding in the 2019–2020 fiscal year. The upcoming project will include several public information meetings to introduce the project to property owners and interested persons in the county. This type of meeting often results in the sharing of important information about history and resources in a study area.

Encompassing almost 73,000 acres, this large rural historic district survey will result in the documentation of much of northern Essex County's history over a 300-year period and will include such themes as settlement patterns, architecture, commerce, ethnic heritage (both African American and Native American), education, agriculture and religion, to name a few. The types of resources likely to be identified will include dwellings, agricultural outbuildings, schools, churches, cemeteries, stores, processing facilities, historic roads, along with the varied landscape features that define this area's unique heritage. The DHR is excited to be collaborating with the ECCA and Essex County once again to nominate to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the NRHP an important historic area in the Tidewater region of Virginia.

For more information on the historic registers and the DHR, please visit the website at www.dhr.virginia.gov.

Elizabeth Hoge Lipford is an Architectural Historian in the Eastern Regional Preservation Office (ERPO) of the Department of Historic Resources. The ERPO is located in Richmond and shares office space with DHR's main office at 2801 Kensington Avenue. With a degree in Historic Preservation from Mary Washington College, Elizabeth has held several positions at DHR including Archivist, Review and Compliance staff, Survey Coordinator and National Register Manager. With deep family roots that extend from King William County, through Essex County and into Westmoreland County, Elizabeth spends as much time as possible at her family's home place on the Northern Neck. She is married to Michael Lipford, Director of the Southern U.S. Division of the The Nature Conservancy and they have three daughters, all presently in college. Although they reside in Richmond, much family time is spent exploring the historic and natural resources all over Virginia.

Architectural Detail at Stratford Hall

Essex Artisans

by Marty Glenn Taylor

Gordon Wilkins and Charles Rackley are recapturing the integrity of many of Virginia's eighteenth-century great houses. as well as that of smaller early buildings in the area. Each man in his separate construction business has made a name for himself in architectural restoration, a highly specialized handicraft that relies on period tools and customized plaster.

"You can't go to Lowe's and buy the tools and materials we use," Wilkins points out. "Heart pine or long leaf yellow pine is almost nonexistent, so it's very expensive." Rackley describes mixing plaster with oyster shells and sometimes charcoal to give authenticity. Their labor is time consuming and highly specialized. The men consider themselves fortunate to be living in an area where there is intense interest in authentic restoration, and where owners have the means to afford the high cost of their labor.

Each has worked at Stratford Hall, Sabine Hall, the Lancaster County Clerk's Office and the Old Jail, to name a few. "My work is very time consuming," Wilkins says. "I make many attempts before I get it right." Currently, he is carving window cornices, called "pelmets" after they are covered in fabric, for a project at Carters Grove.

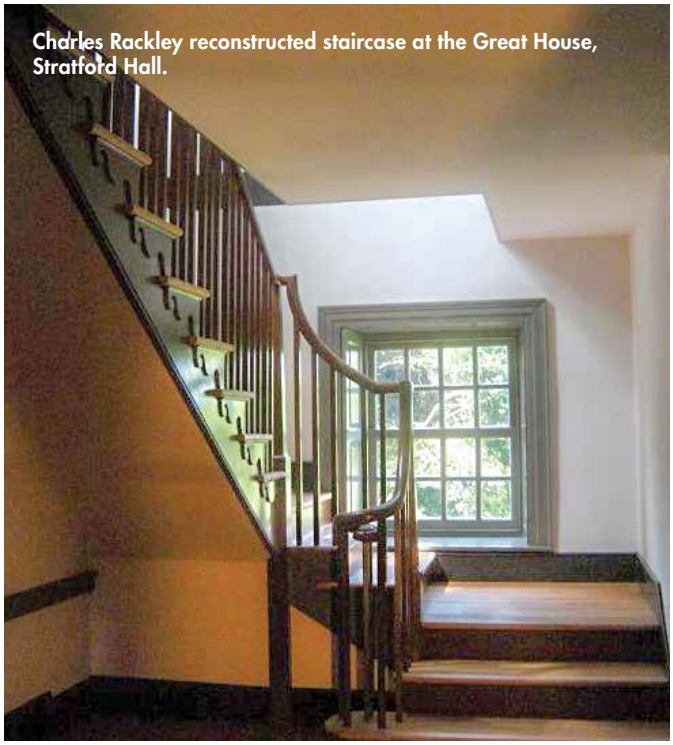
Rackley has a helper who has achieved a name for himself with his dedicated work ethic. "He puts 110 percent into everything he does," Rackley says about Sylvester Johnson, who is known to everyone as "New Baby."

"My mother had eight kids, and when it came down to the last one—me—she told my brothers and sisters that I was New Baby. The name stuck."

Rackley spent twenty-five years in historic restoration and preservation work with the APVA (now Preservation Virginia) at Jamestowne Island before he was sought out

Gate at Stratford Hall

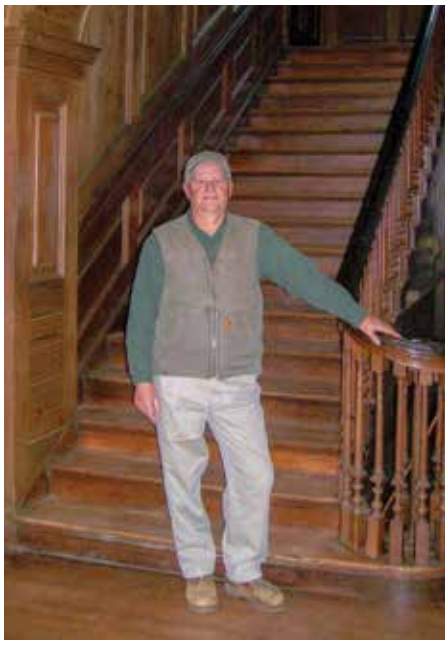
Bookcase Trim Detail



Charles Rackley reconstructed staircase at the Great House, Stratford Hall.

New Baby working at Oakalona.

Kitchen House Office



Charles Rackley

Gordon Wilkins

Sylvester Johnson, "New Baby"

to be project manager for Kenmore in Fredericksburg. This led to his assisting Walker Box at Brook's Bank in Essex County. Wilkins is an area native who studied art at Virginia Commonwealth University and began work in general construction before specializing. Both credit the late Ference Ereg with giving them a start, as does New Baby, who was a valued helper to the master builder during his working years.

Clients of Wilkins and Rackley are effusive in their praise. Julie Strock of Oaklona says:

"Chuck Rackley is the ultimate in preservation and restoration in Virginia. His professionalism and talent are just two of his amazing qualities. In restoring our 1840 house to its antebellum glory, he had to replace and/or reglaze forty 6 x 4 windows, many of which had been boarded up for years. Chuck removed each window, one by one, took them to his shop, repaired and then reinstalled them. Four years of restoration later, we moved in."

Rackley states that working with Carl and Julie Strock on the restoration of Oakalona was extremely rewarding, and he gives credit to his daughters Melissa and Jennifer with helping to restore the windows there.

Ralph Harvard, New York architectural historian and preservationist, has a warm regard for Wilkins:

"Gordon Wilkins is that rare individual who combines both arts and crafts. Skilled in woodworking, both carving and joining, he also has a well-trained eye for proportion and scale. Add to this his deep knowledge of historical architecture and period woodwork , and he has few peers in the country."

Just as in the eighteenth century, Essex builders are once again in the spotlight.

Marty is a Tappahannock resident, transplanted from the downriver village of Morattico. Her soon-to-be-released book entitled *Place of Rising and Falling Water* about Tappahannock will be available at the Essex Museum, as are her other books *The River Me* and *From Some Full Heart.* Marty now lives at Westminster Canterbury in Richmond.

Precision Agriculture
IN ESSEX COUNTY

Modern Farming Practices Benefit Family Farms and Water Quality

by Julie Buchanan

In the northern part of Essex County, family farmer Ben Ellis stands at the forefront of precision agriculture. He's using a variety of new technological tools to improve agricultural operations on the 2,500 acres he farms in the county.

Precision agriculture is changing how local farmers collect data about their fields, giving them critical insights about soil health. By utilizing satellite-supported global positioning system (GPS) technology, precision agricultural practices help farmers better target where to plant and how much fertilizer to apply. This ensures the crop receives only the amount of nutrients it needs to grow, and nothing more. Little is wasted on the land, which means long-term cost savings for the producer and less nutrient runoff entering nearby rivers and streams.

Cover crops such as rye, wheat and barley reduce runoff while promoting healthy waters.

Ellis is using variable rate fertilizer systems on a substantial amount of the 2,500 acres he farms in the county. He is also running pre-sidedress soil nitrate tests, which optimize the nitrogen application to better reflect the needs of the corn crop.

"The latest technology we have is a sprayer that uses satellite imagery," he said. "We don't overspray chemicals or overapply nitrogen."

The precision technology enables Ellis to see his farm in a whole new light. With digital maps, he is able to spot problem areas in the fields sooner and address issues more quickly.

"It's utilizing your land better," he said. "Now, we're just feeding the crop what it needs, per crop. That's helped a substantial amount."

Precision practices require upfront cost to implement, he said, but they pay for themselves in the long run.

"I had the best corn crop I've ever had on some fields last year, with half the fertilizer. And I've got the data to prove it."

Precision planters incorporate GIS based technology to ensure proper placement of seed and fertilizer.

John Hundley monitors crop seeding and fertilizer input rates through GIS based displays.

Ellis believes he has an obligation to do the right thing when it comes to conserving soil and water resources. After all, he uses the river for irrigation and recreation. He wants his farm to stay in production for generations to come.

"If I don't take care of the soil and the water, it won't take care of me," Ellis said. "I'm trying to make the soil better than it was when I got it by using less product. I think precision agriculture is cutting fertilizer use drastically."

What Precision Ag Means for the Chesapeake Bay

Beyond improving farm efficiency, some precision agriculture techniques now play a role in the Chesapeake Bay cleanup process. As Virginia moves to meet its water quality goals by the year 2025, precision agricultural best management practices (BMPs) will be an important tool, particularly in the coastal plain. Precision agriculture represents the next generation of nutrient management, incorporating technological advances in agricultural equipment. Basic nutrient management provides a standard baseline for the application of nutrient reductions. Advanced or enhanced nutrient management, which

Precision Planting Monitor

Ben Ellis discusses planter precision technology with DCR Nutrient Management Precision Ag Specialist, Bob Waring.

"Precision agriculture is a win-win for farmers that use it to reduce fertilizer costs while sustaining desired crop yields, and for the environment which benefits from the additional reductions in nutrient runoff and infiltration, which eventually reaches our streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay."

—Darryl M. Glover, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation, DCR.

includes variable rate applications of nitrogen and phosphorus, zone or grid sampling, and pre-sidedress nitrate tests provide greater level of reductions. Implementation of precision agriculture improves water quality and helps address the ambitious goals set forth by the Chesapeake Bay Partnership, which includes the Environmental Protection Agency, other Chesapeake Bay states, and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) promotes the use and implementation of best management practices to protect water quality through a variety of programs. The DCR administers the Agricultural BMP program for the Commonwealth, which includes education and technical assistance to farmers to help assist participating agricultural producers meet the Bay Clean-up goals and provide local water quality benefits as well. The DCR has begun working with farmers to promote a greater intensity of nitrogen and phosphorus management by utilizing precision agriculture technology.

Precision Agricultural Meets Farm Conservation

John Hundley may be farming the same land as his father and grandfather did, but he's doing it in ways the previous generations never could have imagined.

Hundley is also using precision agriculture technologies to increase productivity on the 1,400 acres he farms in Essex County.

Tractor and plantar at Ben Ellis Farm.

Ben Ellis Farm

"I'm putting the seed or the fertilizer where it's needed and not where it's not needed, if that makes sense," said Hundley, whose farmland drains to the scenic Dragon Run watershed and the Rappahannock River. "You cannot waste the water or the land these days. It's a commodity. If you let it go down, you won't have anything."

Before Hundley even sets foot in a tractor, he's already logged numerous hours at a computer, developing a plan for his fields of corn, soybeans, and small grains. The plans are based on management zones he's created from years' worth of yield maps. When it's time to get his self-driving tractor rolling, plans transfer seamlessly to in-cab hardware that tells the fertilizer applicator or the planter exactly what to do.

Hundley watches it all play out on his monitors.

"Everything's done on a USB stick," he said. "I'll send it from my computer over to the tractor. Technology's a whole lot better than it was."

Hundley became interested in new farming technologies several years ago. Farming in Essex County has its challenges, he admits, such as a lack of topsoil and sandy soils. In an effort to improve degraded land and return organic matter to his soil, he stopped tilling his fields and began utilizing cover crops. Now, about 80 percent of the land he farms is covered in annual ryegrass, canola, and clover, protecting the soil from erosion year-round. None of his land, owned or rented, is ever tilled, which improves the soil structure, increases organic matter, and also helps reduce erosion.

"Taking care of the soil makes it last longer," he said. "It'll be more profitable going forward."

Success with these conservation practices led Hundley to explore the possibilities with precision technology. He started with precision planting and moved on to soil sampling, proceeding next to split nitrogen applications on wheat and corn crops. Splitting nitrogen applications into two or more treatments helps promote plants nutrient uptake and prevents nutrient loss.

Now he's experimenting with variable rate nitrogen and phosphorus, a process by which fertilizer is applied at different rates across one field.

"You got to start off small," Hundley said. "Do one thing at a time, then move on to the next thing. It's a long-term commitment, but it will benefit the farm."

Julie Buchanan is a communications specialist for the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. She specializes in communications for soil and water conservation, outdoor recreation planning, dam safety, and floodplain management. Julie joined the DCR in 2010. She lives in Henrico County.

Sandy and her Shire horse, Foxy.

On The Farm with Sandy Lerner

Published in *The Piedmont Virginian* Summer 2008. Written by Pam Kamphuis.

For this extremely successful high-tech entrepreneur and California transplant, organic farming and restoring the local food chain may be the next new thing.

When Sandy Lerner purchased Ayrshire Farm in in 1996, the 793-acre, Upperville estate possessed "all the old neglect of prospect." That poetic, late-eighteenth-century phrasing is from Jane Austen's Emma; and spending time with Sandy Lerner, as the magazine's editors did recently, is to time-travel: not only backwards into an earlier century, but also forward into an environmentally conscious, sustainable future.

"It was overgrown land," she said of Ayrshire when she bought it, but Ayrshire enabled her to farm. "I wanted to farm," she said—not just own land. And by farm, she does not mean what she calls the "industrial production" of most food that is produced in the United States today.

In 1992, she established a foundation to lease Chawton House—the 400-year-old Austen family home in Hampshire, England—and to establish the Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing. But, as the co-founder of Cisco Systems, Sandy Lerner is perhaps best known as a high-tech entrepreneur. She also founded Urban Decay cosmetics, which never used animal testing and whose edgy promotional slogans included, "Does pink make you puke?"

A long-time philanthropist and advocate of animal rights, Lerner remains passionately committed to organic, humane farming and the preservation of farmland and open spaces in Virginia's Piedmont. The Virginia Organic Producers and Consumers' Association is her creation. Ayrshire Farm's magnificent fieldstone manor house, which she restored, has become the site for her annual "Beastie Bazaar," a benefit for abandoned and neglected animals, as well as for special events showcasing organic farming—most recently Heritage Turkeys. Ayrshire Farm also hosts cattle-farming association meetings and equestrian events, including carriage rides.

In nearby Upperville is her restaurant, Hunter's Head Tavern, whose most acclaimed dishes are fresh farm products direct from Ayrshire. In Middleburg, her Home Farm Store (now located in Marshall as Gentle Harvest) offers farm-fresh organic products for home dining.

To have made all this happen—often in the face of huge obstacles—requires "bloody-mindedness,"


Aryshire House


Photo credits Aryshire Farm

Stables

A long-time philanthropist and advocate of animal rights, Lerner remains passionately committed to organic, humane farming and the preservation of farmland and open spaces in Virginia's Piedmont.

a British expression of which Lerner is fond. Without that trait, Ayrshire Farm might now still be run down and overgrown or, worse, carved up into residential housing lots. And all farms throughout the Piedmont would be the poorer without Sandy Lerner's wit and wisdom on their side.

So, how do you go from Silicon Valley entrepreneur to Virginia Piedmont farmer, from Cisco to organic farming?

Actually, the big transition was from farming to Cisco, or at least from our small farm in the Sierras to graduate school in Los Angeles and then Stanford. Moving back to a small town and back to farming was the easy part.

But why Virginia? Why not go back to farming in California?

A lot of reasons ... I like the font on the license plate. I am a jouster and the state sport of Maryland is jousting. But mostly because there is water here and farms that are large enough to farm but not large enough to be interesting to the agribusiness cartel.

But why go back to farming? Farming is generally not considered a sport of the idle rich.

Roger that. In America today, 14 percent of farmers live below the poverty line, and it's getting worse. In the last 10 years, prices at the farm gate have declined 9 percent, while consumer food prices have risen 30 percent.

Like everything else, farming is a lot more fun without a budget. However, I do think I'm a pretty typical farmer in that there's no way to quit once you start—it's in the blood. So, until someone comes up with a 12-step program for us, we are probably going to be farmers. Having said that, America loses 1 percent of its farmers each year. Think about it: in the next century, the U.S. will be entirely dependent on foreign food. In 1900, 45 percent of the population was working in agriculture; today it is less than 2 percent, and the census bureau no longer counts farming as a separate occupational category.

Farms and farmers should be considered a rare and valuable national resource; regrettably, this is not the case. And the only segment of the farming population that is actually increasing is the number of women going into farming ... Go figure.

But if farming takes money rather than makes money, why do it?

That's about eight good questions. I'll address the one about why I farm, given the postwar farming economy. From my point of view, there is both a historical and a moral imperative: First, historically, it was the wealthy landowners—in America, think George Washington and Thomas Jefferson—who could afford to conduct experimental agriculture. People who were trying to eke a living out of the land could not risk trying new theories or technologies. Agricultural research has always been the responsibility of landowners with disposable income.

From a moral perspective, if you count all public and private sector money spent on agricultural research, a small fraction of 1 percent in the United States goes toward the development of sustainable agricultural models. To those of us who believe that sustainable agriculture is

Cattle in Field

Ayrshire Turkey

the only viable long-term agricultural model in terms of the land and our health—which really are the same thing as, like it or not, we really all just eat dirt in one form or another—the galling thing is that we have to pay taxes to subsidize chemical agriculture and then pay personally to fund research into new tools to help us undo the ravage to our environment and our health caused by chemical-based agriculture. And even this doesn't address the moral outrage of the factory farming of food animals.

What about farmers' markets? Prices are pretty high there, at least a lot higher than the supermarket, right? And the price of organic food seems a lot higher than conventionally produced food.

Let's first address farmers' markets: The average farmer in America is now over 60 years old, and 59 percent of farmers have full-time, off-farm employment; the median farming income is around $11,000 a year. So, this means that older people who are already working two jobs now have to haul their produce and stand outside for hours on their day off and hope someone comes and buys it. This seems a bit speculative on all counts and probably not likely to be a significant part in the restoration of the local food chain.

The other short answer is that farmers sell at wholesale and buy at retail. Surprisingly very few farms actually produce food—they produce "food components," like soybeans or corn or wheat—today's farmers have to buy their food just like the rest of us. This has always struck me as rather surreal.

As to prices for organic food, if you consider the subsidies paid to the agricultural conglomerates and the public money which pays for everything from research into herbicides, pesticides, and the antibiotics (70 percent of which end up in animal feed) to the highways used to truck the food, to the environmental clean-up of our air and water caused by modern agriculture, I'm not sure that organic food is more expensive—you just pay all of the bill at the cash register. And, again, this doesn't count the cost that we all pay in the loss of life and productivity from illness caused by systematically poisoning the earth with pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, all of which ultimately end up in the air we all breathe and the water we drink, and the concomitant loss of antibiotic drug effectiveness against those illnesses by overuse in the food chain. My personal guess is that organic food is a real bargain, if one fairly counts all the costs.

Is it very different farming in Virginia, say, than in California?

I was farming in California in the 1960s and 1970s when there were still enough family farms to keep FFA (Future Farmers of America) in the schools and 4-H Clubs going in the rural counties. In that sense, it is like Virginia in that 95 percent of farms here are still family-owned. My family farmed in the Sierras on essentially a vertical rock with very little rain. Here the land is gently hilly, and on average we get enough rainfall to farm, although I hope my neighbors don't think I brought the chronic California drought with me. On the other hand, today California is probably the most progressive state in terms of its turn toward

sustainable methods and the support these farmers get from the state and the land grant universities there. However, South Dakota, Wisconsin, New York, and Massachusetts are also very strong.

Virginia has been somewhat "reluctant" to change its focus away from chemical, commodity agriculture, even though we are losing farms at the rate of 1 percent a year—that's almost 10 farms or 2,000 acres lost each week. And Governor Kaine has just appointed a marketeer from the tobacco industry to be the Agricultural Commissioner, so I wouldn't look for leadership or change anytime soon.


Mother Pig with Piglets

What do you mean by "restore the local food chain"?

America is probably now a net food importer—it's a little hard to tell because of how the government keeps statistics (for example, meat is not counted as a "food import"). This situation, importing food, I find disgraceful given the vast extent of this nation's farmable land. I don't know about you, but I'm a whole lot more worried about being dependent on foreign food than foreign oil; you don't have to drive, but you do have to eat. The local food system broke down in this country after World War II in the form of industrialized, monopolized agriculture that is now completely vertically integrated.

This agricultural cartel (and there is really only one) wants "free trade." "Free trade" in here really means that the cartel is free to buy cheap foreign food that has been produced with little, if any, regulation as to its safety—as we see now with the recalls of food from China. This drives our own farmers out of business since we have to comply with all of the workforce, environmental, and food safety regulations. With food, too, one gets what one pays for.

On the other hand, our grandparents bought local food as there was not a means to transport it long distances, and they were healthier than we are, and the economy was healthier as well. It's not just Wal-Mart that is driving up the national trade deficit, although it's certainly leading the way. The only solution to saving farms, farmland, and farmers is if people will, again, look to local, seasonal food. Keep food money local, and you'll keep local farms.

You've put your whole 800-acre farm in one easement. Why? Given your animal rights stance, it's obviously not to keep open space for foxhunting.

I really don't believe there is either a conceptual or observed linkage between one and the other. Open space is open space. The ex-Hunt Master who lived near my farm sold his farm to a developer. Yet other foxhunters have been leaders in not only putting their land into conservation, but also encouraging their neighbors to do so. The two farms right next to mine are not in easement; one used to rent the farm to the hunt, and the other still actively hunts, so it seems to swing both ways. A lot. In my view, preservation seems to depend more on kids inheriting land who have an emotional attachment to the land. One thing about farmers: They are attached to the land, literally and figuratively. If I had children, I'd farm just to give my kids a love for the land.

How do we turn farming around and help it become "the next new thing," or at least profitable enough to keep families on the land?

There are success stories out there—New Zealand and England for starters, and the Champlain Valley and upstate New York here at home. The organic dairy industry in Wisconsin is thriving, while Loudoun has gone from over 400 dairy farms in 1980 to just one in 2008. South Dakota has a very successful beef-marketing program that Virginia would do well to

emulate. California, North Carolina, and even Missouri have well-developed state programs for helping farms to diversify and turn away from chemical commodity agriculture. There's also quite a bit of money out there, if one looks, including Department of Defense (DoD) money, which seems to indicate that food security is surely a big part of national security. I'm reminded about the early internet, another instance of DoD foresight.

The information is out there to save farms. It would be nice if Virginia Tech or the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) would be more in touch with these issues, but as I've said, that's not likely. Out of 551.5 people employed at VDACS, the .5 is that one half-time person employed to support ALL of "specialty" agriculture, meaning anything other than chemical commodity crops of factory-farmed poultry. The other 551 are mostly oriented toward exporting our produce internationally, but that's pretty pointless since Europe and Asia are actively banning genetically modified and cloned food, which is what the majority of farmers in Virginia grow. That's one reason I started the Virginia Organic Producers and Consumers' Association (VOPCA): to try and do what I think VDACS and Tech should be doing to save farms and farmers in Virginia. Frankly, I'd rather they did it as there's a whole lot more of them than me.

With Ayrshire Farm, Hunter's Head Tavern, and the Home Farm Store, you've in effect created your own local food chain. Are there any missing links?

Gee, I'd like to think I've done what you just said, but what I've really done is create my own vertical monopoly. To restore the local food chain, we would need capital and social investment to resurrect processing and packing plants, grain mills, regional distribution systems, as well as local educational, information, and labor infrastructure, all of which support the rural economy. It's kind of like putting the trolley system back into the center of the city—a lot easier if you never took out the tracks.

We have no rural economic infrastructure left to support local agriculture in this part of Virginia; no extension agents who are able to assist farmers with issues ranging from organic methods of worming livestock to viable, diversified economic models; no local feed stores who have people who are knowledgeable about a broad range of animal and soil nutritional issues, natural weed management, local planting seasons, etc. Those people have all moved out of agriculture or died. I'm only trying to get my neighbors to see what food used to be and what it can be again, and for food security to spend a little extra energy and money to seek out better food and to build a habit of adding good food back into their daily lives.

As to the big issue, the regeneration of those rural enterprises such as baking, milling, dairying—including cheese and ice cream—slaughterhouses, packing plants, warehouses, small equipment parts and repair, welders, commercial refrigeration and storage facilities, even vets who know how to treat farm animals without the drugs prescribed by the U.S. organic standard—in short, rebuilding the local rural economy by rebuilding the local food chain—that's going to take a lot more than a one-horse team. Other places have done it and we can too if the future we want for Virginia includes open, productive land. The alternative is sprawling everywhere around us.

Road to the American Revolution

by Wright H. Andrews

Essex County has a rich colonial history in which local residents' actively challenged British actions that threatened colonists' fundamental legal rights in the years leading up to the American Revolutionary War, which began in April 1775. This article illustrates this by highlighting Essex residents' response to such British provocations at two critical times along the county's road to the American Revolution.

The Stamp Act Crisis and Essex County's Ritchie Affair

The British government was left with huge debts at the end of the Seven Years' War, the colonial portion being called the French and Indian War (1756–1763). Not surprisingly, the British Parliament felt that henceforth, the American colonies should bear more of their own defense costs. In early 1764, the English government announced its intent to raise revenue by taxing Americans to help defray these costs. It passed the Stamp Act on March 22, 1765, which required colonists to pay a modest tax on all of the printed documents they used. This included newspapers and publications, legal documents, ship's papers, licenses, and other printed materials.

Colonists reacted strongly against this tax, which was viewed as a dangerous precedent for future taxation by Parliament without colonists' consent. Earlier taxes had been deemed measures to regulate commerce, but the Stamp Act was seen as a direct tax on the colonies without approval of the colonial legislatures. Parliament's action triggered strong concerns among many colonists as they saw this as imposing taxation without representation in violation of their basic rights as Englishmen. Also, violators of the act were to be tried in British Vice Admiralty Courts, thus denying colonists a trial by a jury of their peers, another of the recognized constitutional rights of Englishmen.

Leading citizens in Essex and other Tidewater counties were

Archibald Ritchie House


Customs House

quite aware of the Stamp Act's implications, and most were strongly opposed to paying the tax. Colonel Francis Waring, who represented Essex in the House of Burgesses, and Colonel William Roane, also a member of the House and brother-in-law to Archibald Ritchie, a central character later in this story, were the leaders of opposition to the Stamp Act in Essex County. Across the Rappahannock, in Westmoreland County, Richard Henry Lee, who became one of the major revolutionary leaders, and Landon Carter of Sabine Hall in Richmond County were particularly vocal against the act and became its leading critics in the Northern Neck.

George Mercer, the Crown's local stamp distributor, after hearing residents' strong opposition, announced that stamps would not be distributed unless the Virginia General Assembly assented. Despite this development, Lee and other opponents remained at the ready to challenge any further threats to implement the act. Archibald Ritchie, a leading wealthy Scottish merchant based in Tappahannock in Essex County, posed such a threat. In early February 1766, Ritchie stated before the Richmond County Court that he had a shipload of grain, worth £2,800, ready to send from Tappahannock to the West Indies to avoid the grain spoiling and intended to clear the ship out of port with stamped paper. He added that he knew where to get stamps despite Mercer's earlier pledge against distributing stamps.

Lee promptly learned of Ritchie's comments and began contacting leading planters and plotting strong steps to stop Ritchie. Lee and his colleagues were enraged at Ritchie's stance and feared that if he were

allowed to break ranks, others would likely follow, and the Stamp Act would come to be accepted in Virginia. A paper, likely written by Lee and addressed "To the Good People of Virginia" quickly appeared, condemning the Stamp Act and attacking Ritchie as "the greatest enemy of his country" and someone "who should be punished, unless he immediately give up his intention . . . and publicly inform us of this change of his opinion. Let us so do with this man, that fear may haunt him in his dreams, and in the day find no safety."

Essex citizens were aroused and planned to confront Ritchie on February 21, 1766, the Essex County Court day, and force him to give up on his stated intention of using stamped paper, "destroying" him and his property if necessary. A crowd of about seventy men marched from the courthouse to Ritchie's house, which is now known as the Customs House, where they voiced their concerns to him. However, they went away peacefully when he asserted he had cleared his ship in the normal way without stamps. Learning of this the next day, Lee was not mollified, and redoubled his efforts to rally other planters to make Ritchie an example of what would happen to anyone who dared voice support for the hated act. He and his brother, Thomas Ludwell Lee of Stratford Hall, and others including George Washington's brothers, pushed forward to a major public confrontation with Ritchie. They called for leaders from various Rappahannock River Valley counties to gather to discuss opposition to the Stamp Act and how best to deal with Ritchie. A large planning meeting at Leedstown, on the Westmoreland shore of the Rappahannock, was set to be followed by a public confrontation with Ritchie the next day in Tappahannock. Accordingly, on the evening of February 27, 1766, over 100 gentlemen from twelve counties—Essex, Middlesex, Caroline, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Prince William, Fredericksburg, King George, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Richmond, and Lancaster—met at Old Bray's Church (or another Leedstown location, depending on the account) and debated how to respond. These men called themselves "sons of liberty" and "friends of liberty," as did Stamp Act opponents in some other colonies.

At the end of the evening, 115 members signed what are called the Leedstown Resolutions (or Resolves,


Richard Henry Lee

the Westmoreland Resolutions, or, more properly, the Resolutions of the Westmoreland Association in Defiance of the Stamp Act, 27 February 1766). Drafted by Richard Henry Lee, these resolutions put forth the principles on which their opposition to the Stamp Act was based. Among the signers were Richard Henry Lee and his brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee from Menokin (both of whom later signed the Declaration of Independence), and fourteen men from Essex County, including James Edmondson, John Lee, Colonel William Roane, Meriwether Smith, John Upshaw, Colonel Francis Waring, John Bland Jr., James Booker, John Edmondson Jr., John Edmondson Sr., Ebenezer Fisher, Reuben Meriwether, James Webb, and Smith Young.


Brockenbrough House on St. Margaret's School Campus

The Leedstown Resolutions provided as follows:

Roused by danger and alarmed at attempts, foreign and domestic, to reduce the people of this country to a state of abject and detestable slavery by destroying that free and happy condition of government under which they have hitherto lived,

We, who subscribe this paper, have associated and do bind ourselves to each other, to God, and to our country, by the firmest ties that religion and virtue can frame, most sacredly and punctually to stand by and with our lives and fortunes, to support, maintain, and defend each other in the observance and execution of these following articles:

FIRST: We declare all due allegiance and obedience to our lawful Sovereign, George the Third, King of Great Britain. And we determine to the utmost of our power to preserve the laws, the peace and good order of this Colony, as far as is consistent with the preservation of our Constitutional rights and liberty,

SECONDLY: As we know it to be the Birthright privilege of every British subject (and of the people of Virginia as being such) founded on Reason, Law, and Compact; that he cannot be legally tried, but by his peers; that he cannot be taxed, but by consent of a Parliament, in which he is represented by persons chosen by the people, and who themselves pay a part of the tax they impose on others. If, therefore, any person or persons shall attempt, by any action, or proceeding, to deprive this Colony of these fundamental rights, we will immediately regard him or them, as the most dangerous enemy of the community; and we will go to any extremity, not only to prevent the success of such attempts, but to stigmatize and punish the offender.

THIRDLY: As the Stamp Act does absolutely direct the property of the people to be taken from them without their consent expressed by their representatives and as in many cases it deprives the British American Subject of his right to trial by jury; we do determine, at every hazard, and paying no regard to danger or to death, we will exert every faculty, to prevent the execution of the said Stamp Act in any instance whatsoever within this Colony. And every abandoned wretch, who shall be so lost to virtue and public good, as wickedly to contribute to the introduction or fixture of the Stamp Act in this Colony, by using stampt paper, or by any other means, we will, with the utmost expedition, convince all such profligates that immediate danger and disgrace shall attend their prostitute purposes.

FOURTHLY: That the last article may most surely and effectually be executed, we engage to each other, that whenever it shall be known to any of this association, that any person is so conducting himself as to favor the introduction of the Stamp Act, that immediate notice shall be given to as many of the association as possible; and that every individual so informed, shall, with expedition, repair to a place of meeting to be appointed as near the scene of action as may be.

FIFTHLY: Each associator shall do his true endeavor to obtain as many signers to this association, as he possibly can.

SIXTHLY: If any attempt shall be made on the liberty or property of any associator for any action or thing to be done in consequence of this agreement, we do most solemnly bind ourselves by the sacred engagements above entered into, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, to restore such associate to his liberty and to protect him in the enjoyment of his property.

In testimony of the good faith with which we resolve to execute this association we have this 27th day of February 1766 in Virginia, put our hands and seals hereto.

After adopting the resolutions, most of the gentlemen involved took the ferry the next morning across the Rappahannock, at Layton's Landing near Leedstown, and rode down to Tappahannock to confront Ritchie. When they arrived, their ranks were greatly inflated by many smaller planters and residents who had been alerted to what was going to occur. About 400 men lined the streets near Ritchie's home. A committee then went to Ritchie and demanded that he immediately take an oath supporting the resolutions and sign a statement of apology and promise to not abide by the act. He was advised that the alternative was that "his Person should be taken and stripp'd Naked to his Waist, tied to the tail of a cart, and drawn to the public Pillory, where he should be fixed for One Hour, and if in that Time he did not comply, that he should be brought up by the Whole Company to Leedstown, there to be farther determined on as should seem expedient to the Friends of Liberty." Ritchie asked for time to consider the situation, but his plea was summarily rejected. He accordingly signed and swore to the following statement which the committee presented to him:

Sensible now of the high insult I offered this country by declaring at Richmond Court lately, my determination to make use of Stampt Paper for clearing out my Vessels; and being Convinced such Proceeding would establish a Precedent by which the hateful Stampt Act might be introduced into this Colony, to the Utter Destruction of Pubic Liberty; I do most submissively, in Presence of the Public, Sign this Paper meaning to show my deep Remorse, for having formed so execrable a Design: and I do hereby solemnly Promise and Swear on the Holy Evangels, that no Vessel of mine shall sail cleared on Stampt Paper, and that I never will on any Pretense make Use of, or Cause to be made Use of Stamp Paper, unless the Use of such Paper, shall be authorized by the General Assembly of this Colony.

This Tappahannock gathering was reportedly the largest public protest in Virginia against the Stamp Act. It was widely reported, including in a front-page article in the Virginia Gazette on the May 16, 1766. Ritchie learned his lesson, and later became an ardent patriot. Interestingly, however, Tappahannock's second leading Scottish merchant, Archibald McCall, who held the post of king's attorney (prosecutor), nonetheless still vowed to enforce the Stamp Act. Accordingly, another mob gathered on May 6, 1766, about two months after Ritchie's apology, and moved to McCall's house, which we now know as the Brockenbrough House on St. Margaret's School campus. There are only limited accounts of all that may have happened, but apparently, the crowd smashed windows, shot guns, and may have physically assaulted McCall. His later attempt to prosecute the rioters got nowhere.

Landon Carter Spoon Photo credit Hill Wellford

In any case, Stamp Act protests came to an end shortly after the McCall incident. Parliament repealed the statute on March 18, 1766, and a formal proclamation of its repeal was issued in Williamsburg on June 9, 1766.

The Stamp Act's repeal actually determined what table serving ware Landon Carter, one of the area's leading opponents of the act, was to have. In 1766 he ordered his agent in London to send him new spoons, directing that they should be made of silver if the act were repealed, but of bone or horn if the act were not repealed. Given the repeal, his agent sent him a set of silver spoons engraved with his initials and the inscription "Repeal of the American Stamp Act."

Tea Act of 1773

THIS STATUTE WAS INTENDED TO BAIL OUT THE ECONOMICALLY TROUBLED BRITISH EAST INDIA COMPANY BY GIVING IT A MONOPOLY ON TEA SOLD IN THE COLONIES AND RETAINING THE EXISTING THREE PENCE DUTY ON TEA.

Townshend Acts

The basic constitutional issues that divided the colonies and Britain became clear during the 1765 Stamp Act crisis, but it took another decade for the Revolutionary War to begin in 1775, and then another twelve years for the American victory and adoption of the US Constitution. Tensions between the colonies and Britain cooled for a time after 1765, but the British felt that additional colonial revenue was still needed to help pay the ongoing significant costs of stationing British troops in the colonies. Many British leaders also thought that the colonists needed to be brought into line to comply more fully with parliamentary mandates. Accordingly, in June 1767, the new chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Charles Townshend, proposed, and Parliament passed, five additional measures, generally called the Townshend Acts, that reignited colonial opposition to British rule. These measures, which were intended to raise revenue and ensure colonial compliance with British laws, suspended legislative actions by the New York Assembly until the colony paid the cost of quartering British troops and certain related expenses; created a powerful American Customs Board with members appointed by the British to decide American trade cases without juries and without appeal; increased the cost of tea imported into the colonies by the British East India Tea Company; created special colonial courts, with judges appointed by the British, to prosecute violations of the revenue laws without juries and without appeal and with a rebuttable presumption that alleged violators were guilty; imposed taxes on lead, glass, tea, and various goods imported from Britain that were regularly used by colonists and legally available only from British sources; and increased British officials' powers of search and seizure of alleged contraband goods.

Not surprisingly, on learning of the Townshend Acts, colonists in Virginia and elsewhere recognized that their underlying political differences with Britain were ever present and that they must forcefully challenge Parliament's mandates, or submit, which they were unwilling to do. After numerous legislative protests, including "nonimportation associations" (written agreements between political leaders, planters, and merchants to not import British goods) in Virginia and other colonies, Parliament in early 1770 repealed the Townshend duties, except the one on tea, which Lord North, the new prime minister, argued should be kept to assert "the right of taxing the Americans." While simmering concerns remained, there was a period of relative quiet until Parliament, in May, passed the Tea Act of 1773. This statute was intended to bail out the economically troubled British East India Company by giving it a monopoly on tea sold in the colonies and retaining the existing three pence duty on tea. Tensions increased greatly as many citizens in Virginia and its sister colonies viewed this law as Parliament's continuing to do as it pleased without regard to colonists' constitutional rights. Many felt that if colonists did not forcefully challenge this action promptly they would soon forfeit their right or ability to do so.

Moving toward Rebellion: The Essex Resolutions of July 9, 1774

Massachusetts residents took the lead in "stirring the pot" with the famous Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, when Bostonian patriots, dressed "in the Indian manner," tossed tea valued at roughly £10,000 into the town's harbor. Not surprisingly, this greatly angered British political leaders, and Parliament proceeded to pass a series of new laws, known by the British as the "coercive acts," and by the Americans as the "intolerable acts," intended to force the colonies into compliance with its mandates. The most infuriating to Americans was the Boston Port Act of March 30, 1774, which closed the port until reparations were made for the earlier Tea Party.

Colonists were outraged by Parliament's actions. Virginia's burgesses, on May 24, 1774, passed, with the support of Essex's representatives James Edmondson and William Roane, a resolution Thomas Jefferson and several colleagues "cooked up," calling for a day of "fasting, humiliation, & prayer" by the burgesses on June 1 in support of Boston. Governor Dunmore, however, viewed the resolution as "a determined resolution to deny and oppose the Authority of Parliament," and two days later, dissolved the Virginia Assembly.

The former burgesses then promptly reconvened in Williamsburg's Raleigh Tavern to determine how to respond. On May 27, 1774, eighty-nine of the former burgesses, including William Roane and James Edmondson of Essex, signed a new association urging Virginians to oppose British actions aimed at "reducing the inhabitants of British America to slavery." Purportedly, concerned over the impact of agreeing to stronger measures against British merchants and manufacturers, and uncertain as to how other colonies would respond to Boston's plight, this association did not spell out a detailed commercial boycott program, but it did reaffirm the boycott on dutied tea and called for nonimportation of most East India Company products. It also included Richard Henry Lee's proposal for an annual convention of representatives from all colonies. Then, after most legislators had left town, former House of Burgesses Speaker Peyton Randolph received copies of recent resolutions from Boston, Philadelphia, and Annapolis. Randolph called together former burgesses still remaining in Williamsburg. On May 31, 1774, they sent all former Virginia burgesses a letter inviting their counties to send delegates to a Virginia Convention in Williamsburg on August 1 for further discussions and to elect representatives to a General Congress of the colonies beginning in September 1774. Burgesses were instructed to determine, in the interim, "the Sense of their respective Counties." (This direction for determining the public will together with the call for the day of public fasting on June 1 were very significant and savvy political moves as they ensured that the broader freeholder population, not just the gentry and political leaders, would be engaged and invested in opposition to the Boston Port Act and other oppressive British measures.)

As directed, at least forty-one of Virginia's counties held public meetings in June and July 1774 to elect and instruct representatives to attend the August 1 convention. Some counties promptly agreed to nonimportation associations, while others determined to wait to see what the convention decided. Demonstrating broad knowledge and strong commitment, our Essex forefathers came forth with clear, sweeping, and forceful resolutions. Essex Burgesses William Roane and James Edmonson called a meeting "of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the County of Essex" at the courthouse on Saturday, July 9, 1774, "seriously to consider the present dangers which threaten ruin to American Liberty." John Upshaw, a former Essex burgess, sheriff, justice, and signer of the earlier Leedstown Resolutions, was selected as moderator of the July 9 meeting, and William Young served as clerk.

Massachusetts residents took the lead in "stirring the pot" with the famous Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773, when Bostonian patriots, dressed "in the Indian manner," tossed tea valued at roughly £10,000 into the town's harbor.


1729 Essex Court House

Leading Essex planter Robert Beverley of Blandfield came to the meeting opposed to strong confrontational action such as a tough import-export ban. Beverley, instead, proposed sending a group of large planters to England to offer to pay the king an annual contribution in lieu of a tax. He argued this would fulfill Britain's revenue needs and allow for good relations to resume with the colonies. His approach, however, was out of touch with the broader community's mood, which favored stronger, more confrontational actions, and accordingly, it was rejected. Instead, Essex citizens adopted resolutions endorsing a tough, comprehensive trade boycott proposal and other measures that showed they were well informed and supportive of forceful colonial actions to defend their rights. To fully appreciate the significance of these Essex Resolutions of 1774, it is necessary to study the actual text, which provides an impressive, comprehensive, and clear statement of our forefathers' concerns and positions. The provision's wording leaves no doubt that Essex residents, including the gentry and yeoman farmers, were aware of, and strongly committed to—"at the expense of [their] lives and fortunes"—the most forward political thinking held by leading patriots in Virginia and its sister colonies. The text of the Essex Resolutions is as follows:

Essex Resolutions of July 9, 1774

At a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of Essex County, Virginia, at the courthouse thereof, on Saturday, the 9th of July, 1774, seriously to consider the present dangers which threaten ruin to American liberty, Mr. John Upshaw being chosen moderator, the following resolves were proposed and unanimously agreed to:

FIRST. Resolved, That we will at all times and on all occasions bear true and faithful allegiance to his Majesty, King George the Third, and as free men we have always been and ever shall be willing constitutionally to give and grant liberally our property for the support of his crown and dignity and the preservation of our parent state, but that we can never consent to part with it on any other terms.

SECOND. Resolved, That the legislature of this Colony, for the purpose of internal taxation, is distinct from that of Britain, founded upon the principles of the British constitution and equal in all respects to the purposes of legislation and taxation within this Colony.

THIRD. Resolved, That the people of this Colony in particular and of America in general have a clear and absolute right to dispose of their property by their own consent expressed by themselves, or by their representatives in Assembly; and any attempt to tax or take their money from them in any other manner and all other acts tending to enforce submission to them is an exertion of power contrary to natural justice, subversive to the English constitution, destructive of our charters, and oppressive.

FOURTH. Resolved, That the town of Boston, in our sister Colony of Massachusetts Bay, is now suffering in the common cause of North America for

the just opposition to such acts, and it is indispensably necessary that all the colonies should unite firmly in defense of our common rights.

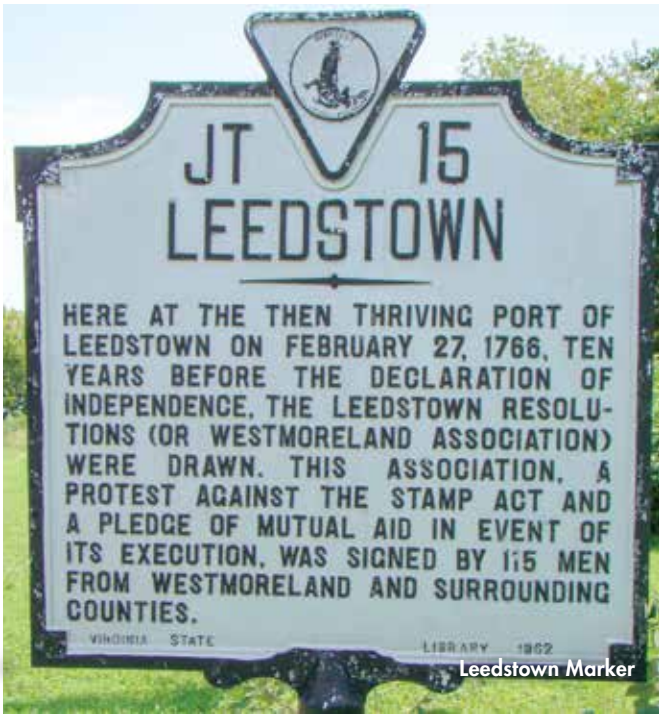
FIFTH. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that an agreement to stop all exports to and all imports from Great Britain and the West Indies, firmly entered into and religiously complied with, will at all times prove a safe and infallible means of securing us against the evils of any unconstitutional and tyrannical acts of Parliament, and may be adopted upon the principles of self-preservation—the great law of nature.

SIXTH. Resolved, That the inhabitants of this county will firmly join with the other counties of this Colony and the other colonies on this continent, or a majority of them, to stop all exports to and imports from Great Britain and the West Indies, and all other ports of the world, except the colonies of North America, if such a measure shall be deemed expedient by the deputies at the General Congress; and whatever agreement the Congress shall come to for the advancing of the common cause of North America, relating to exports, imports or otherwise, ought to be considered as binding as any act of the Legislature, and that we will use our utmost endeavor to support and maintain such general agreement, at the expense of our lives and fortunes.

SEVENTH. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that the several courts in this colony ought not to proceed to the forwarding or trial of civil causes until our exports are opened.

EIGHTH. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that the East Indian Company, having a desire to monopolize a great part of the American trade, to the injury of the other merchants of Britain trading to North America, and knowing well the fatal consequences that must have resulted from their fixing a precedent for future taxes, by importing tea into the colonies, became the willing instrument of the ministry to destroy American liberty, and deserve the loss they have sustained.

NINTH. Resolved, That we do most heartily concur with our late Representatives in their resolve for the disuse of tea and that we will not hereafter purchase any East India commodities whatsoever.



Leedstown Marker

TENTH. Resolved, That the spirited conduct of the town of Boston hath been serviceable to the cause of freedom (all other methods having failed), and that no reparation ought to be made to the East India Company or other assistants for any injury they have sustained, unless it be the express condition on which all our grievances shall be removed.

ELEVENTH. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that any general censure of the conduct of the town of Boston respecting the tea, without allowing to them the motives of resistance upon the principles of public virtue and necessity, is inimical to American liberty, and we are persuaded that none but ministerial hirelings and professed enemies of American freedom will adopt a language so impolitic which manifestly tends to create a disunion of sentiment at this time fatal to America.

TWELFTH. Resolved, That the Parliament have no right to pass an act to remove our persons to Great Britain, or any other place whatsoever, to be tried for any offense, and that we are determined not to submit thereto.

THIRTEENTH. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this meeting that no merchant in this or any other colony of this continent shall advance the goods now

THESE PRE-REVOLUTION EVENTS FURTHER SHOW HOW THE LOCAL AREA GENTRY WERE NOT ONLY AWARE OF, AND ACTING IN CONCERT WITH, POSITIONS TAKEN IN OTHER COLONIES BUT ALSO, QUITE SIGNIFICANTLY, INCREASINGLY ABLE TO DRAW IN SMALLER PLANTERS AND RALLY THEM TO FIGHT FOR COLONISTS' RIGHTS.

on hand higher than they are at the present or have been for some time, and that the merchants in the several counties sign an agreement to that effect.

FOURTEENTH. Resolved, That a subscription be set on foot for raising provisions for the poor of Boston, who now suffer by the blockading up of their ports, and that Robert Beverly, John Lee and Muscoe Garnett, in St. Anne's Parish, and Archibald Ritchie and John Upshaw, in the upper part of South Farnham Parish, and Meriwether Smith and James Edmonson, in the lower part thereof, take in subscriptions for that purpose, who are to consign what may be raised to some proper person to be distributed; and that the before-mentioned gentlemen are empowered to charter a vessel and send it to Boston.

FIFTEENTH. Resolved, That this meeting have the deepest sense of the injuries in which the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain must necessarily be involved by a non-importation resolution, they having placed an almost unlimited confidence in us for a series of years, and by that means have the greatest part of their fortunes lodged in our hands, and that nothing but the desire of preserving our liberties could induce us to adopt a measure big with such melancholy consequences.

SIXTEENTH. Resolved, That James Edmondson and William Roane, Esquires, the late Representatives of this county, be, as they are hereby appointed, deputies to represent us in the general meeting of deputies for the several counties of this colony, on the first day of August in Williamsburg; and we desire that they will exert their best abilities for the security of our constitutional rights and liberties, and to appoint deputies to meet at the General Congress the deputies of the other colonies on this continent.

SEVENTEENTH. Resolved, That the clerk transmit the foregoing proceedings to the printers to be published in their Gazette.

As directed, Essex Burgesses Edmondson and Roane attended the Virginia Convention (August 1–6, 1774), which selected seven prominent Virginians to represent the colony in the First Continental Congress, held in Philadelphia on September 5–October 26, 1774. The Virginia Convention also adopted a strong new association that, among other things, provided for the nonimportation of British goods, nonexportation of tobacco and other products, nonimportation of slaves, merchants not inflating prices to take advantage of shortages, and citizens contributing to the relief of Boston. The Essex Resolutions of July 9 comported well with what the convention adopted.

The Essex committee charged with gathering and shipping provisions to Boston was quite successful and raised over a thousand bushels of corn for Bostonians. When shipping the corn, Messrs. Beverly, Lee, Upshaw, and Ritchie wrote a supportive transmittal letter to John Hancock and asked for an update on the political situation in Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the ship loaded with the corn was blown totally off course and ended

up in the Leeward Islands east of Puerto Rico. Luckily however, a sympathetic merchant there purchased the corn and forwarded the proceeds to Boston, where they were finally received in March 1775, only weeks before the start of the war. Essex leaders received a reply letter, dated March 14, 1775, and expressing appreciation on behalf of the city, from Samuel Adams, one of America's greatest patriots.

This brings us to the cusp of the American Revolution, which began in April 1775, when hundreds of men from Essex fought, and some gave their lives, for the cause of liberty. As has been shown, along the long road to revolution from challenging the Stamp Act of 1765 by their actions on the Leedstown Resolutions and the Ritchie affair of 1766, and the later Essex Resolutions of July 9, 1774, Essex County residents were quite aware, engaged, and strongly supportive of standing up to Britain in defense of colonists' political rights. Their actions were exemplary and clearly demonstrated that they were very informed and concerned regarding the oppressive British governmental policies. Leading gentry in Essex and the Northern Neck were in close communication and came together to put forth united opposition to British infringements of colonists' rights. These pre-Revolution events further show how the local area gentry were not only aware of, and acting in concert with, positions taken in other colonies but also, quite significantly, increasingly able to draw in smaller planters and rally them to fight for colonists' rights.

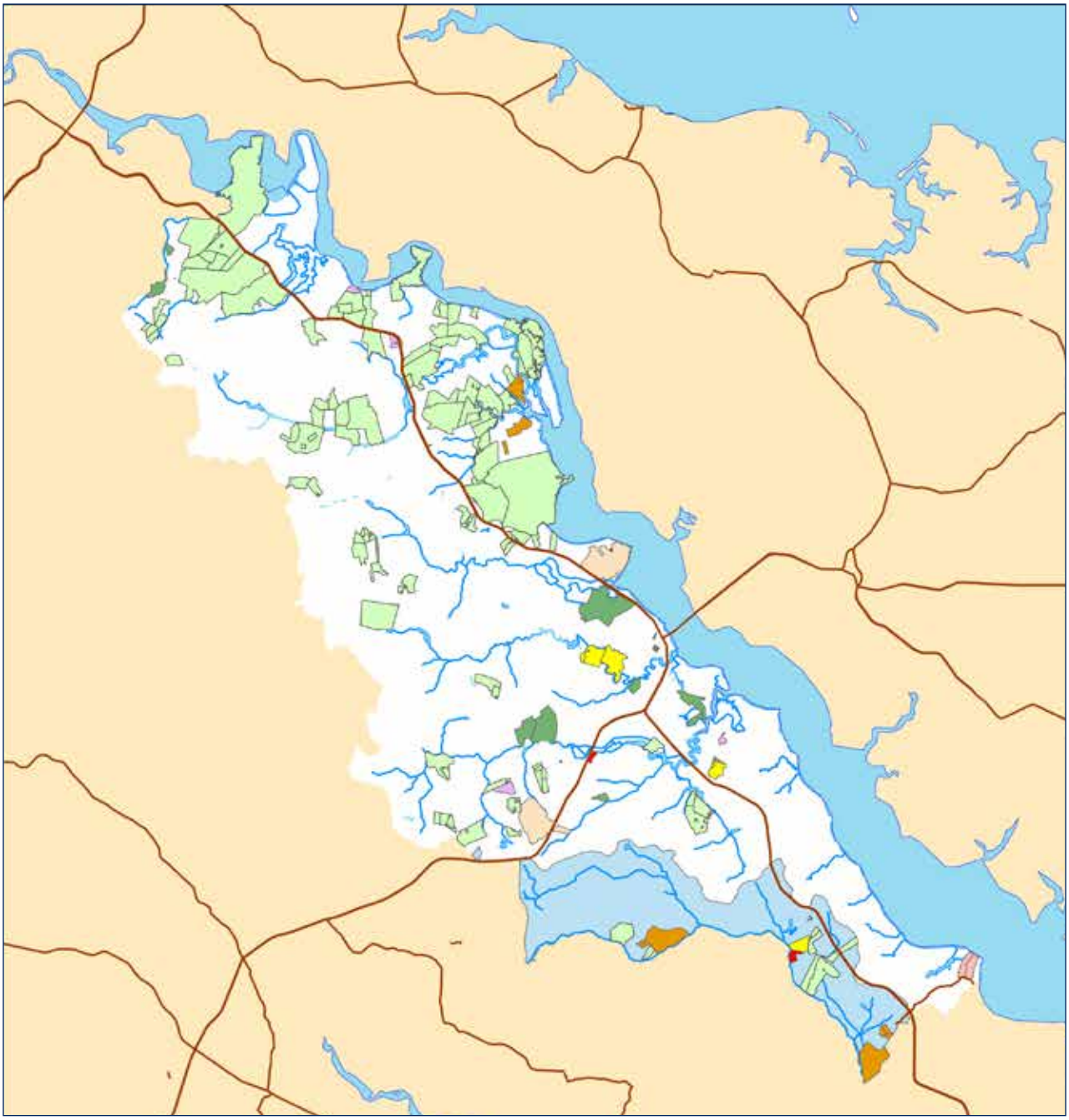
[1] In colonial times, Leedstown was a prosperous river port, but today none of its historical buildings remain, and while a few more recent structures are located in the area, it is no longer a town. A historical roadside marker and several local road signs are all that recall that this locale was important in colonial days.

[2] The convention chose as Virginia's representatives George Washington, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry, Edmund Pendleton, Benjamin Harrison, Richard Bland, and Peyton Randolph, who was promptly elected president of the First Continental Congress. It proved to be the first of five Virginia Revolutionary Conventions and began the shift away from British rule to full self-rule of the colony, which was formally achieved with adoption of the First Constitution of Virginia at the Fifth Virginia Convention on June 29, 1776, the same day Patrick Henry was inaugurated as Virginia's first governor.

Article Sources: This overview of how colonists in Essex and nearby Virginia counties reacted along the road to the American Revolution is derived from numerous sources, including A Planters' Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia by Bruce A. Ragsdale (1996); Revolutionary Virginia: The Road to Independence, vol. 1: Forming Thunderclouds and the First Convention, 1763–1774, a Documentary Record, edited by Robert L. Scribner; Settlers, Southerners, Americans: The History of Essex County, VA by James B. Slaughter; The American Revolution: A Compendium of Terms and Topics by Paul A. Chase (2017); and The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789 by Robert Middlekauff (2005). Those interested in more details on local Stamp Act opposition and the Ritchie affair may wish to consult the following informative accounts upon which this present article relied heavily: chapter 3 of Slaughter's History of Essex County, VA; articles available online in the Essex County Museum and Historical Society's archive: "Tappahannock and the Stamp Act" (May 1975); a very detailed 2010 piece entitled, "Leedstown and Fincastle" by Jim Glanville; and a paper entitled, "Two Men on a Tax: Richard Henry Lee, Archibald Ritchie, and the Stamp Act" by John C. Matthews, contained as chapter 6 in the book The Old Dominion: Essays for Thomas Perkins Abernethy, edited by Darrett B. Rutman (1964). It is also interesting to read the original article about the Leedstown affair that appeared in the May 1766 edition of the Virginia Gazette, which is also available online via Colonial Williamsburg's site.

Wright H. Andrews, a largely retired lawyer, lives with Lisa, his younger, lawyer wife (who still practices law in Warsaw, VA and Washington, DC) and Piper, his beloved AKC grand champion, Nova Scotia, duck tolling retriever, at Hazelswood, their family home on the Rappahannock River, about five miles above Tappahannock, and five miles below Leedstown. His earliest known ancestors in the Essex County area came in the mid-1600s, when Essex was still part of old Rappahannock County. Andrews is a life member of the Essex Museum and Historical Society and a member of its board of directors. In addition, he is president of the Rappahannock Chapter of the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. His e-mail address is: wandrews@andrewsdclaw.com.

Protected Lands 2018
Essex County, Virginia



ESSEX COUNTY COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

Protected Lands as of June 2018

- Department of Historic Resources
- Fish & Wildlife Service
- Middle Peninsula Land Trust
- Middle Peninsula Public Access Authority
- Northern Neck Land Conservancy
- The Nature Conservancy
- Publicly Opened Tax Exempt
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Wetland/Stream Mitigation Bank
- Dragon Run Watershed

MIDDLE PENINSULA PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

N W E S

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Miles

Virginia Counties with the Highest Percentage of Acres in Easement

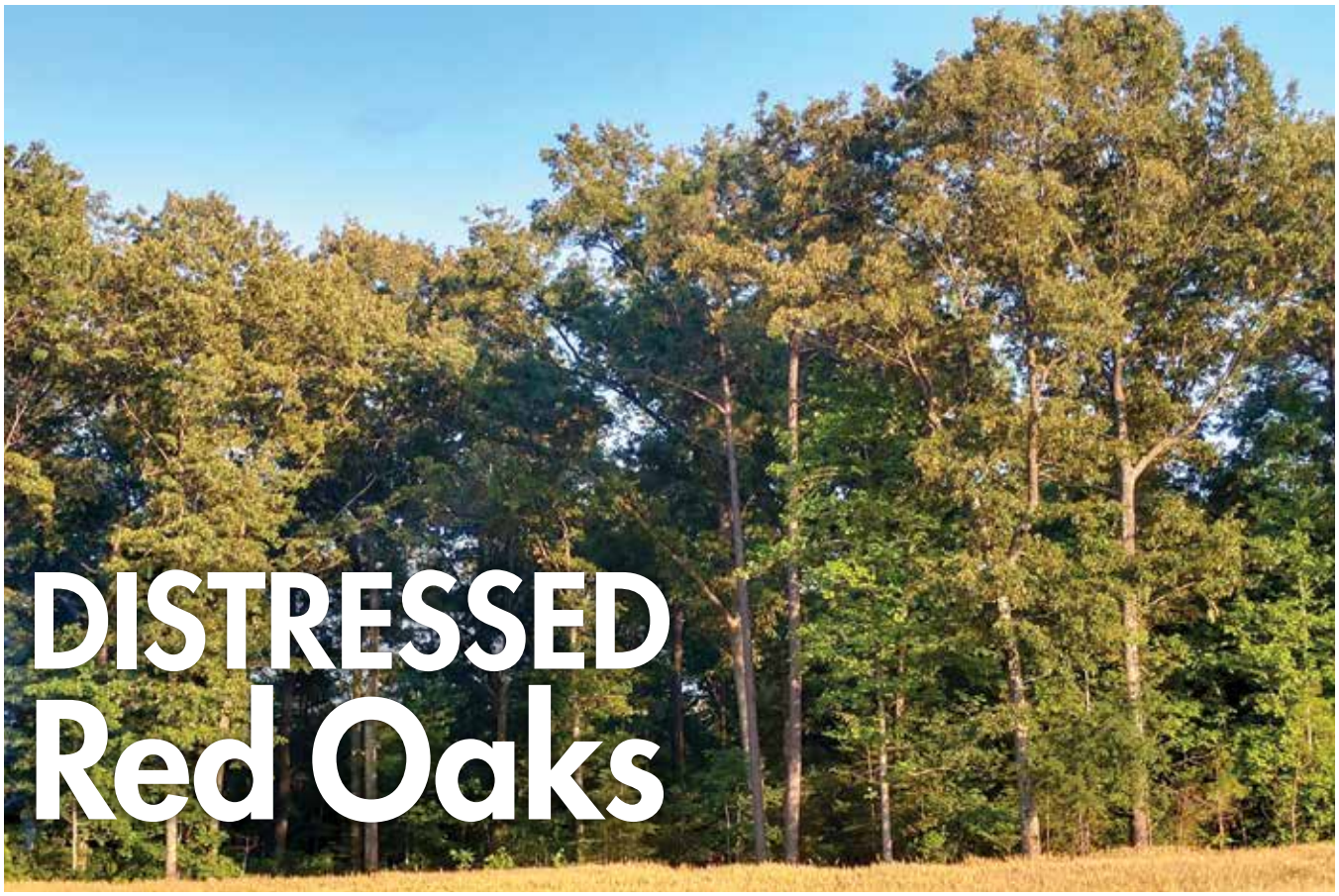
County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Clarke	25,814.21	113,036.62	22.84
Fauquier	93,597.82	449,699.00	20.81
Albemarle	93,608.48	462,469.68	20.24

Non Tidal Counties

County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Fauquier	93,597.82	449,699.00	20.81
Albemarle	93,608.48	462,469.68	20.24
Rappahannock	32,462.61	170,604.53	19.03
Orange	32,893.79	204,425.72	16.09
Greene	10,019.66	97,920.00	10.23
Madison	15,501.89	204,937.78	7.56
Culpeper	18,712.92	238,692.00	7.84
Warren	8,556.23	139,514.66	6.13
Stafford	4,053.60	177,280.00	2.29
Page	2,957.56	193,306.00	1.53
Rockingham	7,253.09	543,360.00	1.33

Tidal Counties

County	Acres under Easement	Total Acres	% in Easement
Essex	26,026.52	165,120.00	15.76
King and Queen	23,177.28	202,406.08	11.45
King George	7,974.28	115,199.82	6.92
Richmond	7,218.27	122,534.21	5.89
Westmoreland	8,890.88	146,674.97	6.06
Northumberland	6,384.01	123,071.81	5.19
Lancaster	3,336.41	85,208.47	3.92
Middlesex	3,182.83	83,391.87	3.82
City of Fredericksburg	254.80	6,711.00	3.80
Spotsylvania	5,094.07	263,180.83	1.94



DISTRESSED Red Oaks

by Ted Reynolds, Boo Garrett, Peggy Reynolds and Dolly (Reynolds) Brennan

In the early morning hours, we sit on our porch in the big yellow swing that creaks and snaps with every sway. Somehow, it's comforting to hear those noises as we take in the view of a soybean field and the trees just beyond it. Soybeans, corn, winter wheat, and trees have been making their rotation for decades on Gray's Farm in Hustle, Virginia, but just as the sun comes up, we are reminded of the problem that's been slowly plaguing our view for the past two years: the oak trees—specifically, red oak.

Their leaves have begun to curl up to create a new shade of green dulled with brown that can be seen both up close and from far away. Now our trees, which once stood tall and healthy, are becoming two-toned, sparsely leaved reminders that something is wrong. Whether you're a tree farmer, agriculture expert, forester, front-porch coffee drinker with an eye for leaves, busy family that's taken a moment to have dinner together under your once-shady oak tree, this problem is also yours.

In 2017 we noticed that thirty-four red oak trees in our yard and red oaks in a 200-acre section of our farm had changed. The leaves were curled up and presenting their brownish, distorted underside. We have seen this discolor and distress elsewhere in Virginia as well as other states. We are not alone in our observations. Our farmer, our forester, our neighbors, our neighboring extension agent have also noticed the red oak problem. Realizing something was wrong with these trees, we began our quest for an explanation

Our research has taken us down several paths. We discovered, on the Internet, that dicamba, an agricultural pesticide produced by Monsanto and other companies, could be the culprit. According to the international news agency Reuters, both Missouri and Arkansas have banned dicamba. The Illinois Public Media reports that Iowa, Illinois, and Tennessee

Photo credits Peggy Reynolds

The distressed leaves of a red oak.

are receiving thousands of complaints and concerns about the effect of dicamba on red oaks. We called our forester and staff at the local Essex County Forestry Department, who came out to see the trees. They agreed that we had a major problem. They contacted the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), which sent its scientists to complete an analysis of the trees. Their report stated that "the symptoms of distortion on the younger leaves are consistent with chemical injury from a growth regulator type herbicide, such as 2,4-D, or dicamba." Since the report did not indicate that insect/pest infestation, fungus, or other environmental factors were possible causes, the DOF declined to get involved, referring us instead to the US Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service (DAES).

So our next focus became the DAES. We followed protocol and asked the DAES to perform a chemical analysis. Samples of leaves were taken for two years and analyzed for pesticides. The Commonwealth's Office of Pesticide Services stated that "no pesticides [were] found at detectable limits" for either year. However, the state agency tests for dicamba at the level of 3/100, but dicamba can be detected in red oaks at the level of 1/800. In DTN's Progressive Farmer magazine of April 4, 2017, Emily Unglesbee reported that weed scientist Kevin Bradley of the University of Missouri categorizes red and white oaks as extremely sensitive to dicamba. This extreme sensitivity is registered at 1/800, not 3/100. Our trees' level of dicamba would not show up on the tests used by the state. Since our red oaks were still visibly in jeopardy, we asked the DAES what our next step should be. The DAES replied that the problem was not in its domain and suggested we contact the DOF.

As we sit on our front porch now, dizzied by the continuously revolving it's-not-my-problem door, we still wonder under whose domain this mysterious problem falls. Who is the right person to call and what is the correct channel to find concrete answers? We have asked the ECCA to help us by contacting Bettina Ring, the secretary of agriculture, whose domain includes both the DOF and the DAES. In a December 30, 2017, article in Lancaster Farming, Secretary Ring said one of her goals was "being able to support families to continue to keep that land in their family, to keep it intact, and to keep forestry or agricultural land wherever possible." We hope Secretary Ring can provide us with the tools and support to solve this devastating problem and give us guidance as we learn how to report problems such as this one in the future. If you see any possible damage to your oak trees, please contact your forestry departments, extension agents, and Secretary Ring.

Ted and Peggy Rennolds live on Grays Farm in Hustle, Virginia. They are retired. Ted is an avid gardener and fisherman and Peggy is an artist.

Office of the Secretary
of Agriculture and Forestry: Bettina Ring
804-692-2511; Fax Line: 804-692-2466

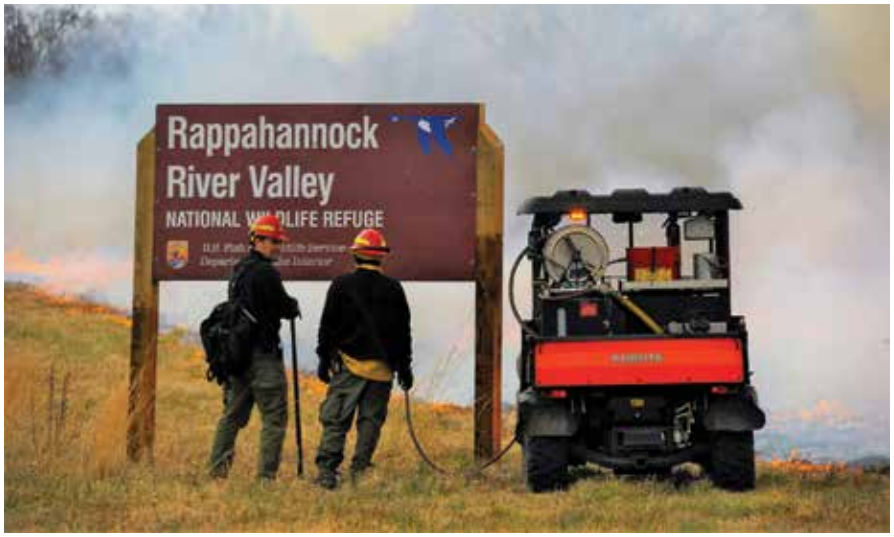
Prescribed Fire

by Joe McCauley

When applied carefully in a controlled, or "prescribed," manner, fire is an important tool that wildlife managers use to benefit targeted species. The use of prescribed fire to improve habitat for grassland-nesting birds was on full display over the past month at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Fire is one of nature's most powerful forces. When fire occurs at the wrong place or at the wrong time, it can be catastrophic—witness the Thomas Fire in California that began in December 2017 and burned nearly 300,000 acres. It destroyed over 1,000 structures and cost one brave firefighter his life, with an estimated $10 billion in property damages. However, when applied carefully in a controlled, or "prescribed," manner, fire is an important tool that wildlife managers use to benefit targeted species.

The use of prescribed fire to improve habitat for grassland-nesting birds was on full display over the past month at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Fire was applied to four refuge units totaling 449 acres. The purpose of the burns was to set back the growth of woody vegetation such as sapling trees and shrubs, and to promote new growth of various species of grasses. Those include big and little bluestem, Indian grass, gamma grass, and switchgrass. Also called "bunch grasses" or warm season grasses, these species thrive in warmer weather between 80 and 95 degrees F and grow in clumps with bare ground in between. Cool season grasses such as fescue grow more like sod and do well in temperatures between 65 and 70 degrees F. The benefit of warm season grasses to ground-nesting birds is they provide plenty of cover for nesting, and also space underneath to forage on the ground.



"We at the refuge are extremely happy about the results and finally prescribing some fire to the fields that were long overdue for disturbance."

Lauren Cruz, Refuge Biologist

Species that are targeted for this habitat management are experiencing long-term population declines. All these species nest on the ground, making them vulnerable to predators in the absence of good cover. As grasslands are converted to other uses, these birds simply have no place to go to breed, making the work on the refuge that much more important. "We at the refuge are extremely happy about the results and finally prescribing some fire to the fields that were long overdue for disturbance," said refuge biologist Lauren Cruz, who served as a crew member on the burns. "These burns will suppress and reduce woody vegetation, that are prime perches for nest predators, allowing breeding grassland birds such as grasshopper sparrow, northern bobwhite, eastern meadowlark, prairie warbler, and bobolinks to thrive. The reduction of woody vegetation as a result of these burns will also stimulate the growth of our warm season grasses, increasing the habitat quality."

"Prescribed fire" is an accurate and descriptive term for the burning that happens on the refuge. Each proposed burn unit comes with a written "prescription" detailing all the parameters that must be in place before the first match is lit. These include wind speed and direction, relative humidity, existence of fire breaks, time of year, personnel, and equipment. If any of these factors are not within the written prescription, the burn does not happen. For example, in the Rappahannock River Valley, the end of the burning window is April 15, when grassland birds can be expected to be engaged in nesting activities. The prescription is the means by which the refuge ensures that safety remains the paramount concern and that habitat objectives are met.

Having the right type and number of firefighters is essential for any prescribed burn. Crew members are assigned different duties based on training and experience and are led by the "burn boss," who directs all aspects of the fire. In these

days of low funding and reduced staffing levels for all conservation agencies and organizations, the fire community has found that partnerships are essential for carrying out prescribed burns. This year's Rappahannock burns involved staff from three state agencies, (Conservation and Recreation, Game and Inland Fisheries, and Forestry), one nonprofit (The Nature Conservancy), and no less than nine different Fish and Wildlife Service offices from around the Northeast. "The refuge is grateful for our many conservation partners who assisted us with the burns this winter and spring," said Bill Crouch, acting refuge manager. "By working together, we were able to meet our habitat objectives for these important grasslands."

Specialized equipment is also an important factor in safely completing a prescribed burn. One example is the Marsh Master, a low-ground-pressure-tracked machine that can traverse marshes without getting stuck or creating ruts. Pontoons located inside the wide tracks have the dual purpose of holding water that can be pumped out to control fire and allowing the machine to actually float if needed. If equipped with a hand-held flame thrower, the crew member working on the passenger side can help with ignition, while other ignition crew use drip torches to safely lay out a string of fire.

The use of intentional fire to manipulate vegetation has been practiced in North America for thousands of years. American Indian tribes were found to be using fire to clear land at the time of the first European arrivals and they very likely had their own prescriptions for accomplishing their objectives. Since then we have come a long way in understanding the science of fire management and how best to employ it as an effective habitat management tool on national wildlife refuges and other public and private lands. The other major use of prescribed fire is to reduce heavy fuel loads safely before they ignite and cause major catastrophes like the Thomas fire. Congress and state governments must provide sufficient funding such that prescribed fire remains in the toolbox for wildlife conservation and for the safety of those living in fire-prone communities.

Joe McCauley retired in 2015 after thirty-two years with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and now serves as the Chesapeake Fellow for the Chesapeake Conservancy (www.chesapeakeconservancy.org), Joe can be reached at jmccauley@chesapeakeconservancy.org.

Navajo rug and baskets sold at Teec Nos Pos trading post.

Teec Nos Pos

by Linda Shields

Several years ago, I traveled with a friend to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to visit galleries and museums. One that was of particular interest was the Santa Fe Museum of American Indian Arts and Culture. On the first wall of a gallery featuring Navajo rugs was a photograph of Hambleton Bridger Noel in front of his trading post, Teec Nos Pos, located on a Navajo reservation in the Four Corners area of New Mexico. Hambleton was not from that part of the world. Rather, he was identified as being from Tappahannock, Virginia. Being almost a native of the area myself, I was astonished that someone would relocate to a Navajo reservation in the middle of nowhere to start a business. What an interesting journey. Surely there must be a story. And there is.

Hambleton Bridger Noel was born in 1876, in Essex County, to Dr. Henry Reginald Noel and Clara F. Hambleton Noel. His father, a surgeon in the Confederate Army, lived only a year following Hambleton's birth. The family home was a plantation called Paynefield, located on Mt. Landing Road. After Dr. Noel's death, Hambleton's mother, originally from Baltimore, decided to return there to be closer to her family. They grew up in Baltimore with little contact with Essex County. In 1892 T. E. Hambleton, a trustee, sold Paynefield to Lawrence Andrews. In 2009, Paynefield, which was then owned by Andrews's grandson Lawrence B. Andrews, who had no heirs, was sold to Maxie Broadus. The house burned in 2011 and Mr. Broadus built another house on the property.

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Hambleton Noel packed a wagon and moved to Arizona, seeking relief from TB. His journey was about 2,100 miles. His three brothers had already started trading goods on Indian reservations in the region. Traveling to this part of the United States was no small feat at that time. First of all, there were no developed roads, just paths and dirt trails. Hambleton also had to go through the Carrizo Mountains. Once in northeastern Arizona, he began trading with the Navajo Indians near a circle of cottonwood trees. He was a white man on an Indian reservation and, as you can imagine, he was not, at first, completely trusted. But eventually, he gained the trust of the Navajos and was allowed to build a trading post, which he named Teec Nos Pos, meaning "cottonwood trees in a circle" in Navajo. From this small beginning evolved one of the most successful trading posts in the Navajo nation. Hambleton respected the Navajos and encouraged them. He taught them discipline and courtesy, based on his Christian upbringing. As a teacher, he was able to enlighten them about the outside world.

In 1911, at the age of thirty-five, Hambleton Noel married Eva Foutz, who was a Mormon, and eventually sold the business to other members of the Foutz family. The sale was prompted by a recurrence of TB. So Hambleton and his wife traveled to Fruitland, Arizona, bought a ranch, raised their family, and lived there until he died in 1967 at the age of eighty-eight. But the trading post remained a center for the Navajo community. Improvements were carried out, such as the construction of good roads and railroads.

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Teec Nos Pos Pictorial Rug
Very few examples of Teec weaving have survived that include Yei figures (Navajo holy people). Here, three female Yeis are set against a white ground, surrounded by feathers. A rare example.
54" x 106" circa 1915-1925

Teec Nos Pos Rug
Large Teec rugs tend to be long and narrow. The browns and greens in this example are derived from native vegetal dyes.
63" x 151½" circa 1915-1925

Teec Nos Pos Rug
This rug features a border design often found in more complicated form on Oriental rugs. Note the pattern of crosses in the center surrounded by alternating medallion patterns.
42" x 66½" circa 1915-1920

Weaver buying wool at the Teec Nos Pos trading post.

Tourists came and began buying the Navajo rugs created by the weavers of Teec Nos Pos. Eventually, rugs became the mainstay of the trading post. Originally, blankets had been created and sold before the demand changed to rugs. Other artists would bring in jewelry and wood carvings to sell. If sales were good for artists making whimsical little chickens, then the owner felt the economy was good.

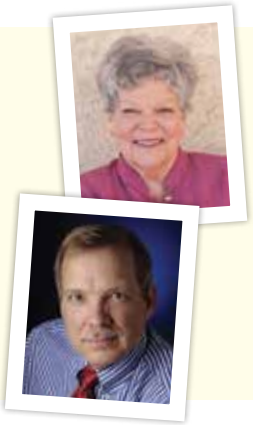
The current owner, John McCulloch, was married to Kathy Foutz, and when they divorced, he took over the operation of the trading post. His passion for the rugs set a standard for Navajo rugs. The ones sold at the trading post have to be perfect, and such perfection commands prices ranging from a few thousand dollars to over $30,000. Sizes also vary from 2 x 3 feet to 9 x15 feet (wall size).

While the Navajos do not use the rugs they weave in their homes, they use the trading post as a way of selling them. Often the weaver and the trader will discuss designs and colors because the weaver is interested in making a design that will sell. The trader usually works with about five families of weavers. While the Navajo are not interested in using the rugs in their own homes, they purchase household items from the trading post, such as food, hay, coal, and fuel for vehicles. The post also acts as a meeting place for folks living on the reservation.

So what would it take for you to leave your comfortable home, load a horse-drawn wagon with goods, ride 2,100 miles of roadless terrain to an Indian reservation in hostile territory, sleep in a tent, and, ultimately, establish a very successful trading post?

In 1911, at the age of thirty-five, Hambleton Noel married Eva Foutz and eventually sold the business to other members of the Foutz family.

Linda Shields lives in Essex County and has traveled extensively. She graduated from St. Margaret's School, Elon University and holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from VCU. After many years of coming to the "rivah" she finally retired here in 2016. Her love of the water and nature make this a perfect place for making art and researching interesting subjects.



Wes Pippenger assisted with the genealogy of the Noel family and shared his insights into the history of Essex County. His help is greatly appreciated.

A Beautifully Broken Essex County by John Plashal

The Evans House in Butylo

John Plashal is a Richmond based photographer that goes to great lengths to find abandoned architectural gems, and then gets creative in order to learn as much as he can about them. He analyzes aerial maps for rusted roofs and the absence of mailboxes. He interrogates loggers, brings donuts to firemen in exchange for coordinates, strikes up conversations with locals in small rural diners, and also just gets lost on back roads.

The result of this strategy has been the accumulation of over 1,000 haunting images, 11,000 Instagram followers (@ride_the_ cliché), a full schedule of speaking engagements, a brisk print business, and a second book in the works. And Virginians can't get enough, if his book and print sales are representative of his market potential. "As humans, we all have a subconscious obsession with a sense of place," Plashal says. "When the place offers an element of hauntedness or mystery, that obsession intensifies. Curiosities become piqued and people want answers for some sense of closure." Plashal not only feels obligated to deliver that to the public but also thoroughly enjoys the process of getting the back stories. He begins by knocking on neighbors' doors to ask simple questions about what they know about the place he just photographed. "Once I let Virginians know that I am native to the state and have expressed a sincere interest in learning as much as I can about something that is endearing or important to them, I am usually in for a lengthy visit." One of the most enjoyable aspects of his hobby is actually not the photography but,

"Plainview", built by Thomas Fendley Taff

Champlain Cannery in Champlain

John Segars House in Dunnsville

Lloyds School in Lloyds

Elliot House in Laneview

> "Virginians go out of their way to help me. They, too, share the same passion that I do and have an appreciation for our rich history."
>
> *John Plashal*

rather, the friendships he makes after the fact with the very folks he's trying to learn from. "Everybody is so friendly and accommodating. They all invite me in, introduce me to their families, and share personal stories and photographs. They also feed me well. The baked pies are the best." Plashal also says, "Virginians go out of their way to help me. They, too, share the same passion that I do and have an appreciation for our rich history. Many of them drive me around and give me personal tours of some of these places. It really is an amazing experience, and a testament to how kind and friendly our state's residents are."

To see more of Plashal's work, or to buy his book or a print, visit his website at johnplashalphoto.com. He can also be contacted at john@johnplashalphoto.com.

Plashal claims to be the luckiest explorer alive within his hobby. "Other explorers in other states will travel three hours to get to one spot to be able to photograph just one place. I seem to be able to find them every 300 feet, especially in eastern, southern, and western Virginia." Essex County is no exception. We asked John to photograph some beautifully abandoned places in our own backyard and he kindly delivered. After photographing and delivering the images to us, his curiosity was again piqued as to the stories about the very places he photographed in our county. Wes Pippinger is assisting him with this information so he can incorporate it into his book signing, and retirement community and VMFA lectures. Plashal goes on to say, "I love what I found in Essex County. There was an abundance of beautifully decayed places that I really enjoyed photographing, a few of which I may incorporate into my next coffee-table book, Memoirs of an Abandoned Virginia. Plashal appreciates maintaining the secrecy of the places he finds, largely out of obligation to the landowners, and therefore rarely relinquishes or publicly shares coordinates. He also has developed such a deep-seated appreciation for the places he finds that he doesn't want others to vandalize them. "Plus, sometimes not knowing where the place is actually lends to the mystery of it."

ECCA 2017 Annual Meeting and Silent Auction at Cherry Walk

ECCA Tent at Cherry Walk

Beverly Wellford, Charlie Seilheimer, Mary Lou Seilheimer

Bob Baylor, Cameron Wood, Nancy Wood

Lee Butler, Betty Jo Butler, Tobey Taliaferro, Hylah Boyd

Waring Trible, Richard Moncure, Craig Brooks, Peel Dillard

Nathan Burrell, Hylah Boyd, Knox Tull

Wes Pippenger

Walter and Beverly Rowland

Gam Rose, Louise Bance, Craig Brooks

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2018 ECCA Annual Meeting is Friday, October 12th.

DETAILS TO COME.

ECCA Board Reports: **Financial**

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 continues to allow the ECCA 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.

Through our collective efforts, over 26,000 acres in Essex County are now under easement. Year to date we have received $22,000 in individual and corporate donations. Additionally, fundraising for the Occupacia Rural Historic District study continues. We were recently awarded a grant from the Richard S. Reynolds Foundation, and have applied for several others to obtain matching dollars to the fundraising initiative by the ECCA for the project.

While this is a great start to the year, we ask you to please remember the ECCA as you contemplate giving through the remainder of the year. In closing, thank you once again for your generosity and we look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting in September.

Thank You for Supporting ECCA

Conservators ≥$2,500

Gam & Kendall Rose
Tripp & Susan Taliaferro, III
Hill & Alice Wellford
Harrison & Sue Wellford

Stewards $1,000–$2,499

Peter & Susan Bance
McGuire & Hylah Boyd
George & Louise Freeman
Randy Hutcheson
Richard & Margaret Lewis
Ben & Susie Rawles, III
Knox & Brenda Tull, Jr.
Jimmy Wheat, III

Patrons $500–$999

Charlotte Frischkorn, Jr.
Roberta Garnett, Jr.
Mac & Boo Garrett
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Ellie Spencern

Associates $250–$499

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Thomas & Mary Page Evans, Jr.
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Friends $100–$249

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Heinz & Isabelle Welger-Merkel
Thomas & Elizabeth Wolf
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This list above shows donations during the calendar year 2017.

June 2018 Dinner of ECCA Board of Directors
held at Wheatland, home of Peter and Susan Bance

1. Flip Sasser, Susan Bance, Ginny B. Sasser

2. Hylah Boyd, Hill and Alice Wellford, Becky Latané

4. Mona Bance, Becky Latané, Alice Wellford

3. Top row: Lawrence Latané, Hill, Flip, Larry Garnett, Julie Strock, Fleet Dillard, McGuire Boyd, Peter, Francis Ellis, Pru Davis
Middle row: Alice Wellford, Becky Latané, Mona Bance, Trent Funkhouser, and Mac Garrett
Bottom row: Ginny B. Sasser, Carl Strock, Hylah Boyd, and Boo Garrett

5. Francis Ellis and Pru Davis

6. Fleet Dillard, Flip Sasser

7. Francis Ellis, Pru Davis, Virginia Haskell

Essex County Countryside Alliance
Post Office Box 356
Tappahannock, Virginia 22560

Courtesy of the Essex County Museum and the Essex County Board of Supervisors