LANDMARKS:

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN NORTHAMPTON COUNTY

A Self-Guided Driving Tour in Northampton County, Virginia based on the 2006 book by Frances Bibbins Latimer.

Frances Bibbins Latimer (1941-2010)
Source: Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

We honor the author by presenting her text in her own words and writing style which reflect the thinking of her time.

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A SELF-GUIDED DRIVING TOUR

Created by the Northampton County Virginia250 Local Commission, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Frances Bibbins Latimer's 2006 ground breaking book, Landmarks: Black Historic Sites in Northampton County, and her 2013 book, Life For Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair, are being used for most of this tour, with verbatim excerpts. We want you to hear her voice as she wrote it, even though the sharing of African American history has changed in the past twenty years. Some text has been updated to the National Archives terminology used in describing African American history. Specifically, "slave" has been replaced with "enslaved person," "owner" with "enslaver," and "black" with "African American." Her text that is selected for the tour is in this **Palatino** font. All other text is in **Calibri** font.

Please be respectful of the cemeteries and sacred sites. Before you go, we suggest you take a copy of Kirk Mariner's book Off 13: The Eastern Shore of Virginia Guidebook available at local bookstores, museums, and some gift shops. Binoculars are recommended as is bug spray from spring to fall. If you have any concerns, get lost, or need local information, please call the ESVA Tourism Welcome Center at 757-331-1660. Keep in mind that cell phone reception is limited in many areas on the Shore. GPS uses "Cape Charles" as the address for many stops that are NOT in the town of Cape Charles. Paper maps may be available at Stop 1 – the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) Welcome Center.

Many of the towns have printable walking tours, available at the "free history lessons" page on the Northampton County, Virginia website. https://www.co.northampton.va.us/visitors/tourism/free_things_to_see_and_do/free_history_lessons

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We highly recommend the Town of Cape Charles' walking tour, "**The Invisible History of African Americans in Cape Charles, Virginia,"** which is a book available locally or online at: *https://theclio.com/tour/2388*

We also recommend visiting The Impact Center at the historic Cape Charles Rosenwald School, 1500 Old Cape Charles Road, Cape Charles.

Landmarks Trail Stops

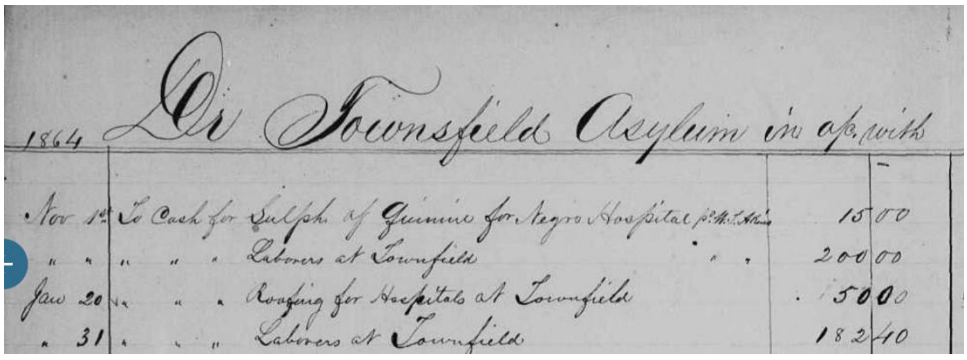
Directions to the stops are included within the Trail narrative.

Stop	Site Name
1	FREEDMAN'S BUREAU – How African Americans organized their communities after emancipation
2	Laws and Property Ownership: The Gingaskin Reservation and Indiantown
3	Religion – Establishing A Church of Their Own
4	Businesses – Developing a Separate Economy and Trade
5	Higher Education: Preparing for Careers – The Tidewater Institute
6	Fraternal Lodges: Developing a Community of Service and Mutual Support
7	Religion – Pastors as Leaders of Change
8	The Call To Serve – Humans As Collateral
9	Schools – Building for Education
10	Community Infrastructure: Repurposing as Needs Change
11	Independent Communities: Unincorporated Towns
12	Weirwood Fair & Giddens Do Drop Inn
13	Politics: Representation During Reconstruction
14	Healthcare – Doctoring in an Age of Segregation
15	Banking on Community Growth
16	Employment: Changing from Agriculture to the Age of Industry
17	Telling the Story: Documenting African American History, By Paul E. Bibbins, Jr., PhD, DHL (Hon)

Stop 1. FREEDMAN'S BUREAU – How African Americans organized their communities after emancipation.

Location: Eastville Courthouse Green, 16404 Courthouse Rd (Business US Route 13)
Several buildings, historical signage, and a museum are located on this Courthouse Green which are free and open to the public.

The Civil War ended 250 years of chattel enslavement for African American people in the southern United States. In most instances this tour begins as the Civil War ends (August 20, 1866) with African American people entering mainstream society as diminished citizens without benefit of education or adequate housing. The tour begins when one day African American people were enslaved persons, barred from acting on their own behalf and the next day were free, without preparation or experience, responsible for their lives and those of their children.



1864 Dr Townsfield Asylum in a/c with

Nov 1st	To Cash for Sulph. of Quinine for Negro Hospital		15 00
" "	" " " Laborers at Townsfield		200 00
Jan 20	" " " Roofing for Hospitals at Townsfield		50 00
" 31	" " " Laborers at Townsfield		182 40

Source: Records of the Field Offices for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Fort Monroe Department of Negro Affairs, Roll 115, Accounts of Lt. Col. Frank White, Superintendent, 1864

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, better known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was established on March 3, 1865. The Freedman's Bureau, headed by General O.O. Howard, was to bring normalcy to areas affected by the war, but also to create humane living conditions for those most affected by enslavement. It had offices in Drummondtown (now Accomac) in Accomack County and Eastville in Northampton County. Although the original plan for the Freedmen's Bureau included both African American and White citizens, White people refused participation in the program, not wanting to be in contact with African American people, some of whom were former enslaved persons.

The Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1866 became law on July 16, extending the work of the agency for two more years. (Source: U.S. Senate, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/generic/FreedmensBureau.htm)

On the Eastern Shore, the Freemen's Bureau sold and rented lands which had been confiscated during the Civil War. Over time, President Andrew Johnson undermined the Freedman's Bureau's funding by returning all lands to their pre-Civil War owners in 1866. The newly freed enslaved persons' position deteriorated, their chance for housing ended, and their opportunity for land vanished.

Although limited funding was a setback to the Freedmen's Bureau, African American people gained by having schools that would not have been sponsored or organized by any other source. The Bureau acted as an organizing agency for local African American people who had saved money they had earned from their labors, formed education boards, bought land, and built their own one- and two- room schools.

The local authorities on the Eastern Shore had no desire to provide the smallest helping hand to the people who had been held in enslavement generation after generation. There were no schools for African American children in either county and the local authorities had no interest in providing any. [Landmarks, Page xiv]

African Americans also suffered from their inability to know how to read newspapers and remained ignorant of the world around them. They could not read contracts or deeds and were often cheated out of property that they had worked hard to acquire.
[Landmarks, Page xv,xvi]
In the Northampton Historic Preservation Society county museum in the 1899 Courthouse (current Administration Building), you will see a measuring rod used to measure freedmen. A replica is in the Old Clerk's Office, by the door.

Also note the Debedeavon plaque on the large rock and the Gingaskin historical marker. Current historic interpretation recognizes that Debedeavon was not the Laughing King.

Directions: Drive 2.5 miles east on Willow Oak Road, cross Route 13, and continue straight on Indiantown Road. Enter Indiantown Park. Note: There is a nice unmarked walking trail that circles the park following the disc golf course.

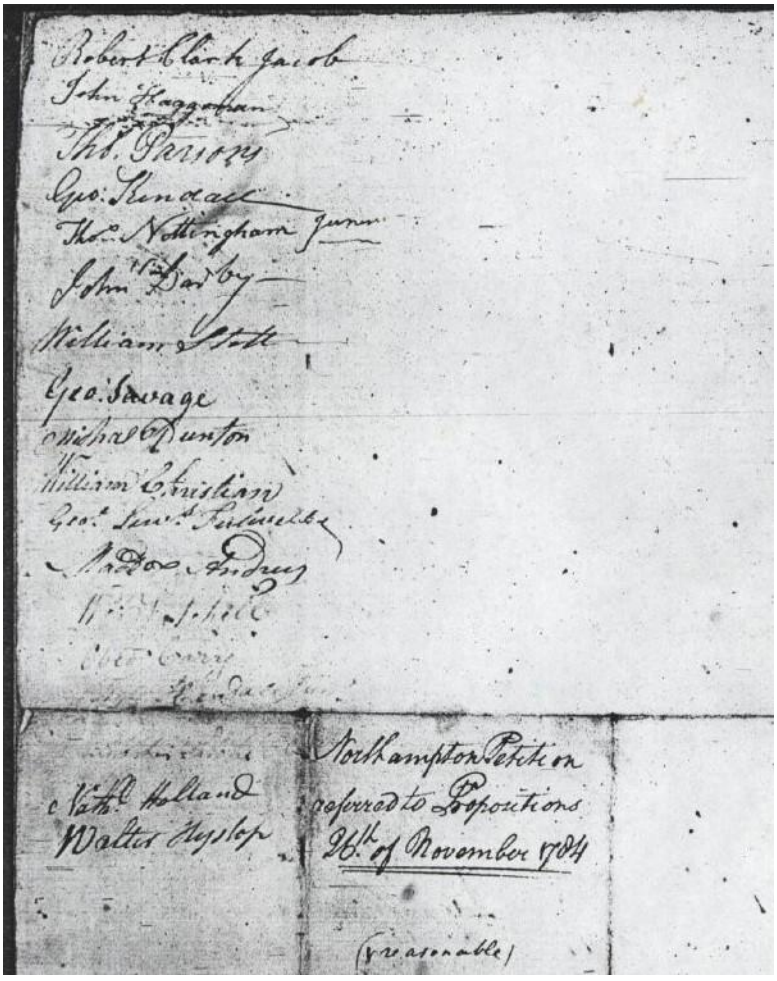
Stop 2. Laws and Property Ownership: The Gingaskin Reservation and Indiantown

Location: Indiantown Park, 7399 Indiantown Rd., Eastville

"In 1641, the Accomac Indians, an Algonquin-speaking tribe located on the Eastern shore and part of the group collectively referred to as Powhatan Confederacy, became known as the Gingaskins when they accepted a patent from the English government for the remaining 1,500 acres of their ancestral lands in Northampton County. Various legal and boundary struggles with their English neighbors over

the years reduced the lands reserved for the Gingaskins to 650 acres, which was patented again in 1680.

Over the years, Indian lands were often leased to outsiders by the state and county governments in order to help support Gingaskin members, most of whom chose to maintain a traditional lifestyle and not farm the lands in the English manner. Great concern was exhibited by White neighbors about the Gingaskins intermarrying with free Negroes and charges were made in petitions to the General Assembly in 1784 and 1787 that there were no more "real" Indians left on the Reservation and therefore the land should be given to Whites who could better protect it, by which they meant farm it in the traditional English way."
Source: The UncommonWealth,



Source: Petition, November 26, 1784: Land Appropriated to the Tribe of the Gingaskin Indians, Northampton County. Northampton County Clerk of Court, Frances B. Latimer Collection, ESVA Heritage Center: Parksley, VA.

Starting in 1792, the General Assembly mandated that the Northampton County court appoint trustees to oversee the Gingaskin reservation, manage its land, and resolve disputes. However, these trustees were largely indifferent to their responsibilities and ultimately pressured—or outright compelled—the remaining Gingaskin members to agree to a division of the land in 1812. The following year, the General

Assembly enacted legislation dissolving the reservation, officially partitioning the land among its recognized members, and granting individual ownership just as with any other Virginian property. This marked the first recorded instance in U.S. history of reservation land termination, legal allotment, and the systematic detribalization of its owners. While three-fourths of Gingaskin individuals initially retained their land, most were forcibly displaced in 1831 after the Nat Turner insurrection.

"Many of the Gingaskins, particularly women, married free people of African descent. After the Virginia legislature granted a Northampton petition to "levy a special tax that would fund the expulsion of all Free Negroes from the county by their forced migration to Liberia," many free men and women left for places like Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Census figures show a decline in the number of "Free Negroes" from 1,333 in 1830 to only 754 in 1840, a nearly 50% reduction. There was an overall population decline across all races, but the number of "Free Negroes" decline never rebounded." Source: *Mariner, p. 176-177.*

Over time, the Gingaskin Reservation area became known as "Indiantown." Many families in the area claim Gingaskin heritage. Into the 20th century, their racial identity was the subject of increasing marginalization and discrimination.

"Racial integrity laws were passed by the General Assembly to protect "Whiteness" against what many Virginians perceived to be the negative effects of race-mixing. They included the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which prohibited interracial marriage and defined as White a person "who has no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian"; the Public Assemblages Act of 1926, which required all public meeting spaces to be strictly segregated; and a third act, passed in 1930, that defined as "Black" a person who has even a trace of African American ancestry. This way of defining Whiteness as a kind of purity in bloodline became known as the "one drop rule." These laws arrived at a time when a pseudo-science of White superiority called eugenics gained support by groups like the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America, which argued that the mixing of Whites, African Americans, and Virginia Indians could cause great societal harm, despite the fact that the races had been intermixing since European settlement.

The Racial Integrity Act remained on the books until 1967, when the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Loving v. Virginia*, found its prohibition of interracial marriage to be unconstitutional. In 2001, the General Assembly denounced the act, and eugenics, as racist." *Source: Encyclopedia Virginia.*

To learn more about the first inhabitants of Northampton County, read Helen C. Rountree and Thomas E. Davidson's 1997 book, Eastern Shore Indians of Virginia and Maryland.

Directions: First, drive back toward Route 13, In 1.2 miles turn left onto Route 600 (Seaside Road). Continue south for 4.4 miles, then turn right onto Sunnyside Road, making an immediate left to stay on Seaside Road. Drive another 6 miles south, then turn right onto Capeville Drive. Follow Capeville Drive to Route 13, where you'll turn right onto the highway. The church will be on your right, approximately 2 miles north on Route 13.

** Please be respectful of the cemeteries and sacred sites.*

Stop 3. Religion – Establishing A Church of Their Own

First Baptist Church, 25283 Charles M Lankford Jr Memorial Hwy, Capeville

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Africans did not come to the new world without a tradition of religious worship. Early in this history, arriving people who did not embrace Christianity were not accorded the same rights as those who were or became Christians. In many cases, Christianity was used as a litmus test, and those who were not Christian became enslaved persons as African American codes grew to close off the Africans from freedom.

For many years, enslavers were required to take their enslaved persons to church with them. Even after enslavement had ended, White church officials tried to maintain control by enforcing this requirement. In some churches, enslaved person entrances were constructed so that they could enter the church separately from the White members and be seated in a segregated area. Some of these entrances led upstairs into balconies. Holmes Presbyterian Church in Bayview is an example. [The side door for the enslaved is still visible.] Other churches provided only outdoor space for enslaved persons.

An Act of the Virginia General assembly passed in 1831 mandated that no one could preach to enslaved persons nor could enslaved persons listen to preaching unless accompanied by their owner. The law, passed after the Nat Turner Insurrection, was intended to reduce the incidents of enslaved person insurrection on the Eastern Shore.

When enslavement ended, one of the first institutions to emerge within the African American community was the church. A Freedmen's Bureau report states that freedmen seemed to be more interested in building churches than they were in building schools.

African American Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches developed almost simultaneously. African American Baptist churches were organized by local ministers, many of whom had been enslaved persons on the Eastern Shore. These churches grew more easily and quickly because the Baptist church had no central head. Each church was an autonomous body. Any group of people with the desire to become a church could organize themselves to be a Baptist church. [Landmarks, page 34]

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a group of African American Christians of lower Northampton County held religious services near the village of Cheapside. If the

weather was favorable, they would meet on Sunday afternoons and worship under a shade tree.

Reverend W.H. Offer, the Methodist minister, and Reverend Caleb Burris, the Baptist minister, preached on alternative Sundays, familiarizing the congregation with the beliefs and practices of both religions. After this group worshipped together for some time, the need for a building became evident. When they began to organize to build, there arose a division within the group: part of the congregation was partial to Methodism and wanted to build an African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church; the other part wanted to build a Baptist church. They agreed to split and two churches were born out of this devout group: the First Baptist Church of Capeville and the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church in Cheapside.

Under the leadership of Reverend John Smith, the First Baptist Church of Capeville was formed on March 27, 1876. In 1877, trustees Fountain Booker, John Williams, and John Knight purchased three acres of land from John H. Goffigon, and the first church was built. Smith served for only a short period of time and was replaced by Reverend T.W. Nettles. Nettles served the congregation of the First Baptist Church for 22 years. During these years, the second church was built and a parsonage was built in Cheapside, Virginnia.

Directions: Head north on Route 13 1.3 miles and turn right onto Fairview Road (which turns into Bayview Circle).

On the way, you might want to stop at Holmes Presbyterian Church, 22635 Bayview Circle. Dedicated in May 1846, the building still retains the historic door enslaved worshipers entered, located on the right, front of the sanctuary.

(3.9 miles) After about 2 miles, turn right onto South Bayside Road (Business Route 13). The stop is less than .5 miles on the right.

Stop 4. Businesses – Developing a Separate Economy and Trade

Location: Cornish & Holland Funeral Home, 21397 South Bayside Road, Cheriton

Before the Civil War, African American people owned no businesses. Most of them lived within the confines of chattel enslavement. A very few free African American men were farmers, but African American sawyers and firemen worked for White-owned saw mills, African American watermen worked on White-owned boats, and African American teamsters guided White-owned wagons.

The United States Census of 1870, the first census that counted all citizens, included former enslaved persons and listed new African American occupations. Carpenters, bricklayers,

cooks, and others once caught in the claws of enslavement now freely plied their trade for money. Services once provided through enslavement for free were now services provided for wages, small wages, but wages just the same.

When the Civil War ended, African American-owned businesses began to appear in the form of cook shops, barber shops, funeral homes, and neighborhood stores. Not until the turn of the century after enslavement did African-American businesses grow larger, better organized, and incorporated.

African American business owners catered to the needs of African American people; African American businesses were always African American businesses. African American funeral directors buried African American people, but never White. White undertakers on the other hand, buried both African American and White. African American doctors treated African American patients; White doctors treated both African American and White. African American preachers married African American couples, White preachers married both. White people always had entry into the African American world, but the opposite was not the case. Circumstances alone created two separate and very unequal worlds, which existed for generations side by side---White and African American water fountains, White and African American schools, and White and African American beaches.

Holland's Funeral Home (Cheriton) –. Using land and a dwelling purchased by his parents in 1909 on Sunny Side Road, Cheriton, Frank Holland established Holland's Funeral Home in 1932. In 1934, Holland married Ruby Treherne, and together they operated the business until 1935, when the funeral home was set on fire. Although the building was not destroyed, the Hollands relocated the business to (Business) Route 13 south of Cheriton. As the business grew, Holland's Funeral Home began to serve more families north of Cheriton. In 1953, a second funeral home was built in Hare Valley to provide viewings and funeral services. Holland died unexpectedly in 1958, leaving the business under the direction of widow Ruby Treherne Holland until 1967, when the ownership of the funeral home passed to Jerome and Julia Cornish of Maryland.

Just south of here on Culls Road, the second oldest mortuary in Northampton County was established by **John H. Saunders**. Saunders had been born an enslaved person and his enslaver was Patsy Smith. He had worked as a carpenter during enslavement. His place of business was located in Culls just down the road from where he grew up in the household of his parents, Sidney and Ibby Smith. John Saunders died in 1910 leaving his widow, Henrietta Fitchett Saunders, and his brother Nim Saunders, to run his business which continued successfully for many years.

No buildings remain to mark the spot where the mortuary stood on the property once owned by John Saunders. Stories say, however, that a fire burned down the building there called the "dead house."

Directions: Drive towards Cheriton and turn right onto Sunnyside Road. After 1 mile, turn left onto Cheriton Cross Road.

Note: On the corner of Sunnyside and Cheriton Cross Roads, there is a small, unmarked cemetery. This is an African American cemetery maintained by the African Baptist Church of Cheriton. At least six Civil War veterans are buried here who served in the "colored" troops, the 10th Regiment of the USCI and the Navy.

Go about 1.5 miles and turn left onto Cobb Station Road. In about 0.3 miles, the state highway marker is on the left. Note: this is public property and there is no safe place to pull off the road, unless you drive 0.2 miles west to Cobb Station, site of the Rail Trail.

Stop 5. Higher Education: Preparing for Careers – The Tidewater Institute

Location: 5186 Cobb Station Road, Rte. 636, 0.75 miles east of Rte. 13

After industrious African American children worked their way through the local elementary system, they were forced to leave the Eastern Shore for further training. The peninsula needed a secondary school for them. The Tidewater Institute was founded by Reverend George E. Reid in 1903. Reid persuaded the Eastern Shore Baptist Sunday School Convention and the Northampton Baptist Association to take over the remains of the burned Spiller Academy in Hampton, Virginia and operate it on the Eastern Shore under the name of Tidewater Institute.

Tidewater Institute operated for two years in the Mount Maria Tent's Hall in Cheriton and in the old Union Baptist Church in Eastville. In 1908, Tidewater Institute purchased two acres of land from Littleton Bibbins on what is now called Cobbs Station Road. A building was soon erected on the site. In 1914, the Tidewater Institute Board of Trustees purchased another acre and a quarter of land and began work on a larger building. At the height of Tidewater Institute's success, it owned forty-two acres on Cobbs Station Road convenient to the rail station.

Meanwhile, the Tidewater Institute expanded its curriculum, accommodating not only the high school but also several lower grades. In 1919, the Institute added a Normal Training High School Course and received from the state a charter granting full industrial, academic, collegiate, and seminary powers. [The Institute attracted students from both Virginia and other Atlantic seaboard states.]

Tidewater Institute was a Baptist school. Its principals were Baptist ministers. Sunday School and preaching services were held Sundays and prayer services were conducted by members of the faculty on Thursday evenings. Students were required to attend.

Source: Students from Tidewater Institute, year unknown.
Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

During the early 1930s, the high school division was accredited as a private secondary school by the State Education Office of the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, Tidewater Institute had no endowment. It was supported directly by school tuition and by funds supplied by the Eastern Shore Baptist Sunday School Convention, the Northampton Baptist Association, the Woman's Education and Missionary Circle of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and the other affiliated Baptist organizations. It was perhaps inevitable that the down-turn in the economy would eventually affect Tidewater Institute. Even though the Institute was the only school charged with providing secondary education for African American youth on the Shore, neither the Northampton nor Accomack Counties' school systems nor the state of Virginia contributed to the operation of the institution. Faced with mounting debts, in 1935, Tidewater Institute closed its doors.

In response to a request from the Board of Trustees of the Tidewater Institute, the Northampton County School Board decided to take over the operation of the Tidewater Institute. In 1935, Northampton County began using the buildings at Tidewater Institute as a high school for African American children. The buildings were used until 1941, when the high school was moved to an abandoned White school in Machipongo.

The property was sold in 1940. The girl's dormitory became an apartment house which burned in 1953. The boy's dormitory was later remodeled and is now a private dwelling.

Directions: Head west on Cobb Station Road to Route 13.

Note two historical highway markers to the left of the intersection. If you want a scenic detour, across the highway is Eyre Hall Drive which leads to Colonial-era Eyre Hall, built in 1760. The gardens behind the private home are open to the public, year-round and free of charge. There is a wonderful view of Cherrystone Inlet if you walk down the wooded path behind the formal gardens. No intact housing for the enslaved remain on the farm property.

Turn right onto Route 13 and head north 2 miles. Drive Courthouse Road (Business Route 13) into Eastville. The stop will be on your right.

Stop 6. Fraternal Lodges: Developing a Community of Service and Mutual Support

Location: Grand Order of the Odd Fellows Lodge, 16410 Courthouse Road, Eastville

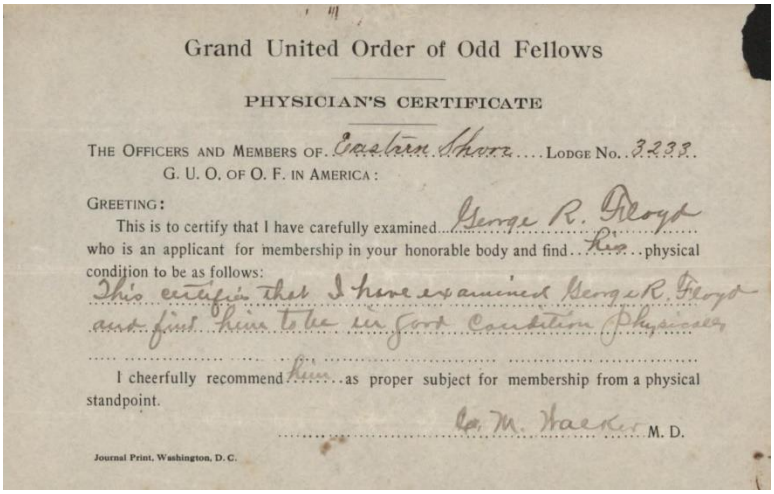
One of the earliest needs of humankinds was to form connections with one another, first for protection, later for social purposes. During the founding of this country, various elements of the citizenry created clubs and secret organizations. Before Africans were brought to this country, they aspired to membership in groups within their individual tribes. After they were imported to North America, they saw the White population's reliance on these organizations, and they remembered stories passed down by ancestors of the secret societies they had lost in Africa.

When enslaved persons were emancipated by the Civil War, they were suddenly faced with the challenge of supporting themselves and their families. The first systems of support to be organized within the African American community were churches, schools, and lodges. It seems natural through example and remembrance that one of the methods of support was fraternal organizations. These institutions emerged almost simultaneously.

The first African American church founded on the Eastern Shore was Union Baptist Church in 1865 in Eastville, and within that church was a school. The second church, Wayman's Chapel, founded in 1867 [location unknown], and later renamed Bethel A.M.E., was organized at the Lincoln School, which was the first public school for African American children and funded by the Freedmen's Bureau. When the Lincoln School in Eastville outgrew its walls, the Odd Fellows Lodge #3233 provided space for the school within its hall. [Freedman's Bureau archives show Lincoln School in Bridgetown. It may have been moved to the current Shorter's Chapel location. See Stop 10.]

Numerous fraternal groups were founded and flourished in the two Eastern Shore counties during and after the Reconstruction Period. These early groups fostered beliefs in good health, good moral conduct, brotherly/sisterly camaraderie, and obligation to their racial community. Their benevolent acts included donating money to schools and churches, providing space in their halls for schools, providing charity to sick and indigent members, paying medical bills, and providing death and burial benefits to the families of deceased members.

In the years just before and after 1900, African American families sought help from these groups when their sons were wrongly accused of crimes against the White population. Such situations forced them to secure legal representation or take flight from the community. The fraternal organizations provided the most important refuge of all, the feeling of security in numbers.



Grand United Order of Odd Fellows

PHYSICIAN'S CERTIFICATE

THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF Eastern Shore ... LODGE No. 3238.
G. U. O. OF O. F. IN AMERICA:

GREETING:

This is to certify that I have carefully examined George R. Floyd who is an applicant for membership in your honorable body and find Him physical condition to be as follows:

This certifies that I have examined George R. Floyd and find him to be in good condition Physically

I cheerfully recommend him as proper subject for membership from a physical standpoint.

Geo. M. Hacker M. D.

Journal Print, Washington, D. C.

Source: Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

Store House and Lodge Hall - Old Eastville Store House, built c. 1870, has a long history of housing African-American businesses and organizations. In 1887,34 Smith Brickhouse and his wife, Cornelia, purchased this old store house, which stands on a quarter of an acre, from James T. Heath. Brickhouse and his wife Cornelia defaulted on the loan, and in 1888, the property went up for public auction. In 1890, it was purchased by Southey T. Collins, Harry H. Upshur, and William M. Fitchett the trustees of the Grand Order of the Odd Fellows #2774. From 1890 to 1936, the building was the home of the Odd Fellows, the Pride of Virginia Masonic Lodge #18, Roselle's Barber Shop, and Miss Sue's Cook Shop owned by Sue Winder. The building's unusual configuration is the result of a 1936 requirement by the town of Eastville that buildings be moved so sidewalk could be laid. The Odd Fellows could not afford to move the building, and it was sold to Howard Adams to be used as his law office. To circumvent the new town ordinance of building setbacks, the top floor was braced and the first floor of the building was cut back to accommodate the new sidewalk.

When the old Brickhouse storehouse was sold in 1936, the Grand Order of the Odd Fellows #2774 and Pride of Virginia Masonic Lodge #18 were left without a meeting place. In 1937 the Odd Fellows purchased property from H.P. and Lula James. It is not known when they constructed their lodge hall, but in 1941 it appears that the Odd Fellows #2774 disbanded and several of their members joined the Odd Fellows #3233. Grand Order of the Odd Fellows#2774 trustees Solomon Jacobs, Joesph G. Collins, and Albert Thomas sold the property to the Pride of Virginia #18 trustees James C. Allen, Charles N. McCune, and William Medley.

Directions: Drive 1 mile north on Courthouse Road. The large White church is on your left.

Stop 7. Religion – Pastors as Leaders of Change

Location: Bethel A.M.E. Church, 15676 Courthouse Rd, Eastville Eastville.
** Please be respectful of the cemeteries and sacred sites.*

Stained glass window inside of this church depicting Bishop Richard Allen, founder of the A.M.E. Church denomination in 1816 in Philadelphia. Photo by C. Burton

Most of the early African Methodist Episcopal churches on the Eastern Shore were organized by Reverend John H. Offer during his two terms of office as a pastor at Bethel A.M.E. Other African American Methodist churches resulted from the work of White northern missionaries and the Delaware Methodist Conference. Most of these churches are now United Methodist Churches. [Landmarks, page 34].

Bethel A.M.E. Church is the oldest African Methodist Episcopal Church in Northampton County. Preparations for the church began shortly after the Civil War, when Bishop Daniel Payne sent Reverend James H.A. Johnson of Baltimore to the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Reverend Johnson, the first A.M.E. missionary to minister to the spiritual needs of the newly freed African American population, arrived at Cherrystone on December 20, 1865. He wasted no time in beginning his work among African American people of the Eastern Shore. The first meeting of African Methodism was held that December evening, about one half mile from Eastville. The meeting was well attended. Forty people enrolled their names for organization and membership of this new church. The group was racially mixed: African American people, who came to join the new church; White people, who came to observe; and Union soldiers, who came as peace keepers. We can imagine a serious deliberation with Rev. Johnson, but no church was organized at the first meeting.

Reverend Johnson went to Accomack County on January 6, 1866. There he organized Macedonia A.M.E. Church in Drummondtown, the first A.M.E. Church in Accomack County. He returned to Eastville the next day, January 7, 1866, to organize an A.M.E. church in that town. The meeting held at Deep Branch in an American Missionary Society school, near Eastville, resulted in formation of the first A.M.E. Church in Northampton County, called Wayman's Chapel, named for Reverend Alexander W. Wayman, an African Methodist bishop. About two weeks later, on January 22, 1866, the first quarterly conference was held in Eastville. Wayman's Chapel drew its membership from the newly freed enslaved persons of surrounding plantations: Hesse Castle, Selma, Kendall Grove, Cessford, and Westover, as well as from already free African American people with leanings toward Methodism.

In three months, Rev. Johnson had served as facilitator and overseer of the founding of three AME churches on the Eastern Shore. In spring of 1866, Rev. Johnson went to Washington, D.C., where, on April 10, he reported to the annual conference. At this meeting, Reverend John H. Offer received his first assignment in the Methodist Church as the first pastor of Wayman's Chapel.

[Note: The following paragraph has been slightly edited for brevity.] Born a free man in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, John Henry Offer joined the army in 1864 to fight for freedom for enslaved persons. Offer served as a sergeant in Company H of the 30th Regiment of Colored Infantry during the Civil War. Before his tenure as pastor in Eastville was complete, Rev. Offer had organized the following A.M.E. churches: Ebenezer (Capeville), New Allen Memorial (Franktown), Shorter's Chapel (Bridgetown), Saint Paul's (Pungoteague), Saint Joseph (Belle Haven), and Mount Zion (Jamesville). All but Mount Zion are still open for worship. Rev. Offer worked unceasingly to spread the word of God and convert African American people to the Methodist religion.

In 1868, the trustees of Wayman's Chapel, Andrew J. Fry, James Brown, Isaac Brown, George Jones, and Samuel Baker, purchased one acre of land just north of Eastville from Severn and Margaret Eyre. On that land, Rev. Offer constructed the first building dedicated for worship by the congregation of Wayman's Chapel [subsequently named Bethel AME] He secured lumber from the western shore, had it shipped from Baltimore to Hungars Landing in Old Town Neck and then transported to Eastville by horse and cart. The new building, sufficient for use by a new congregation, was a single room built between the present sites of the church and the parsonage. A parsonage was also built to house Rev. Offer and his family. Rev. Offer served Bethel AME from 1866 to 1871 and again from 1885 to 1888. The claims on Rev. Offer's time grew to be so great that he was able to preach at services only once a month.

Reverend Robert Davis came to Bethel in 1878. During his tenure, it became obvious that Wayman's Chapel had outgrown the one room church built during Rev. Offer's time. A new church was built that could accommodate 300 to 400 people. Davis served Bethel until 1882.

Directions: Continue north on Courthouse Road, .3 miles. Turn left onto Route 13 and head north about ½ mile. The large brick church is on the right.

Note the previously mentioned Pride of Virginia Masonic Lodge #18 is the building on the left, 15528 Courthouse Road. The Masons still meet there.

Stop 8. The Call To Serve – Humans As Collateral

Union Baptist Church, 15183 Charles M. Lankford Highway, Eastville

Caleb James Burris, a former enslaved person, was the founder and first pastor of Union Baptist Church in Eastville, the first African American church on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Reverend Burris was probably the first African American ordained minister to serve on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, having received training in Philadelphia. He was born circa 1812, an enslaved person of the Parker/Purnell/Costin families.

Early in his life, he wanted to become a minister, feeling that he had been called to serve God by preaching freedom. He was able to travel to Philadelphia by offering his owner two free friends to take his place.

The following history of the First African Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania details the extraordinary risk of his journey to ministry. Note that they use the name of Jacob Burrows, not Caleb Burris; and Samuel Bivens and John Bivens, not Samuel Bibbins. Samuel and John were actually brothers, not cousins. 1870 Census records confirm the names of a "mulatto," "Burras, Caleb," a "Baptist Preacher" in Eastville and farmer "Sam Bibbins," of Eastville. The MilesFiles, https://espl-genealogy.org/, genealogy database cites numerous Burris's (not Burras) in Northampton County. The MilesFiles also cites Catharine Purnell Parker as married to Robert Spady Custis.

> "It is the story of First African Baptist Church's third pastor that exemplifies the congregation's unwavering dedication to its faith and its people. This story is summarized on the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's (PHMC) historical marker that stands outside the Christian Street entrance of the church's current building. Born into enslavement, Virginian James Burrows became pastor of First African Baptist Church in 1832 when cousins Samuel Bivens and John Bivens volunteered themselves as collateral in exchange for Burrows' freedom. Burrows planned to earn the amount necessary to purchase his cousins' freedom, and then return to Northampton County, Virginia to preach. In 1833, Burrows did so, freeing the Bivens cousins; but, instead of returning to Virginia, he remained in Philadelphia. Under Burrow's pastorate (1832–1844), the fledgling congregation grew from sixty members to 252 members, organizing

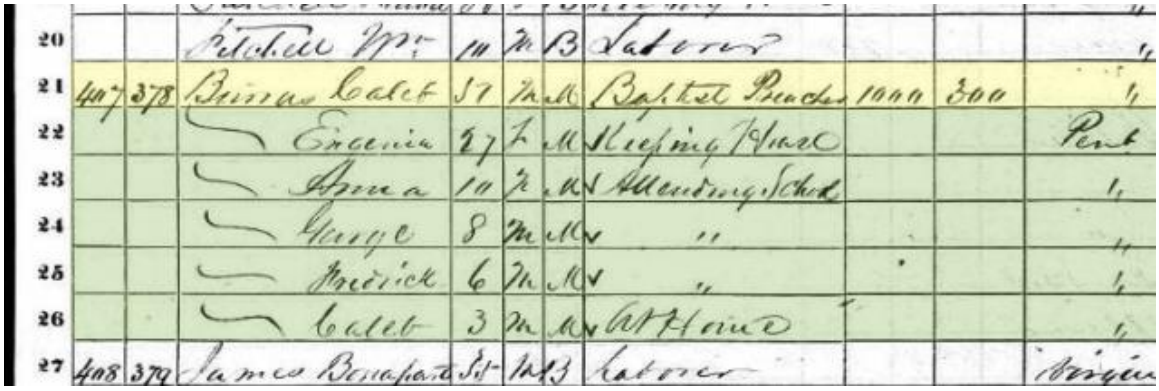
a Sunday School in the process." *Source: Nomination of the First African Baptist Church, 1600–06 Christian Street for the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, 2015, https://keepingphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/1600.06.Christian.FirstAfricanBaptist.Final-with-form.pdf*

Rev. Burris must have returned (to the Shore) sometime during the Civil War, because the Union Baptist Church was organized before the end of the war.

Meetings to organize Union Baptist Church were held in the home of Wesley and Mary Ann Stephens at Town Field. (There is a Town Fields highway marker WY-7 on Route 13 near Cheriton) At this meeting, plans were made for securing the building materials for Union Baptist Church. Founded in 1865, this was the first African American church organized on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

In September of 1866, Samuel Bibbins and Caleb Burris purchased 23 ¾ acres in Eastville from Robert and Catharine Costin. One half of this property became the home of Caleb Burris and his family; it became Burristown. The other half became farmland for Samuel Bibbins, who gave several acres of this land to Union Baptist Church. The first school for African American children on the Eastern Shore of Virginia was held at the Burris home, taught by Eugenia Davis Burris, the wife of Caleb Burris. After 1870, Eugenia Davis Burris taught African American children in the church.

Reverend Caleb Burris served Union Baptist Church from July 2, 1865 until his death in 1874 at the age of 58.



Sources of below: 1870 U.S. Census, Ancestry. Location: Eastville, Va.

Directions: Turn right and continue north on Route 13. Turn left, drive 2.5 miles, and turn left onto Young Road.

On your right is the Barrier Island Center. Historically, this was the Almshouse Farm, which served as the site of the Northampton County poorhouse for almost 150 years, from 1804 until 1952. There is a small exhibit about the poorhouse in the museum. The 1910 education building, behind the Almshouse, was the poorhouse for the African Americans. The 1804 Quarter Kitchen likely housed enslaved workers until emancipation.

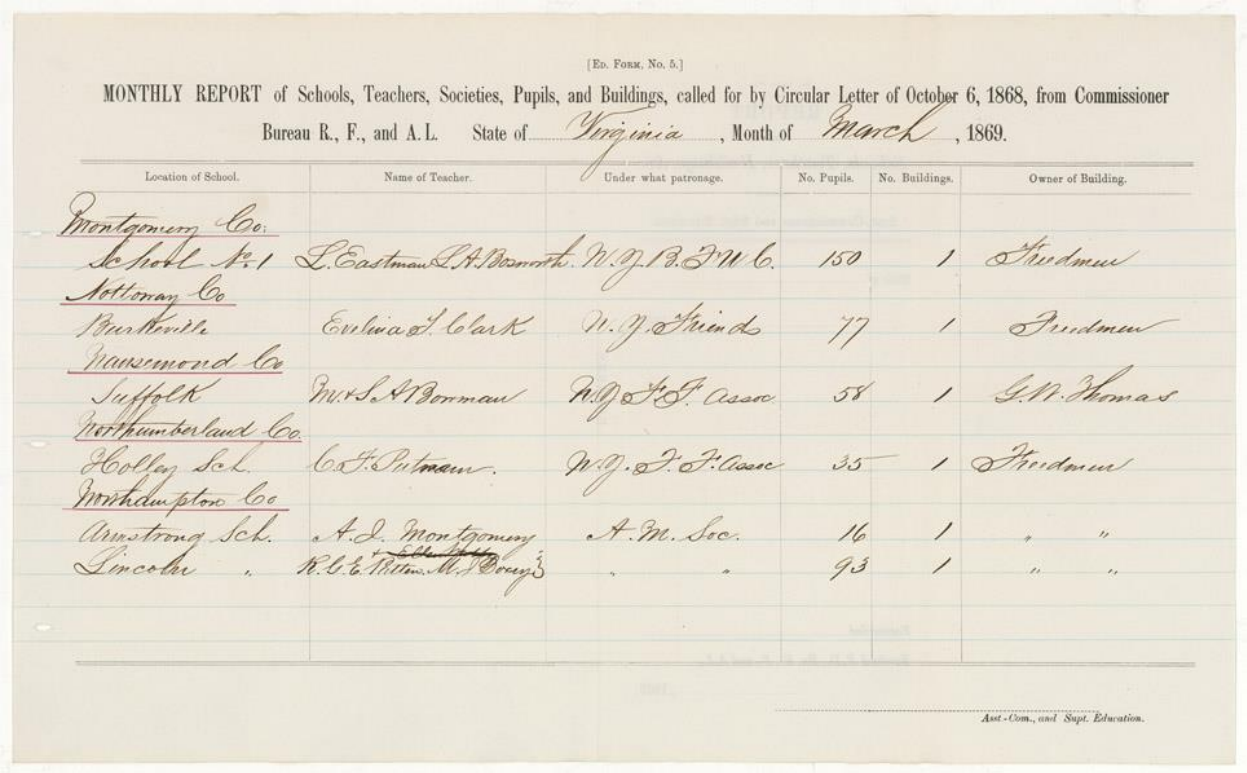
The school is a short distance on the right. Note the historical highway marker.

Stop 9. Schools – Building for Education

Location: 7207 Young St, Machipongo – formerly Northampton County High School

The Freedmen were eager to build churches and then schools, but the Freedmen's Bureau convinced them of the wisdom of focusing on schools. However, when they attempted to purchase land, they discovered that it was owned by White citizens who were not disposed to selling land so former enslaved persons could be educated. Little private schools sprang up all over, with some teachers having but the most rudimentary of skills try to provide education for African American children and adults.

On May 25, 1867, the local representative of the Freedmen's Bureau reported a day school was two miles south of Eastville (p. 79). In Bridgetown, a group of freedmen purchased an acre of land and collected $80.00 toward the $250.00 needed to construct a building. By the end of 1868, under the direction and protection of the Freedmen's Bureau and the American Missionary Association, the [relocated] Lincoln School opened in Bridgetown (p.80).



[Ed. Form, No. 5.]

MONTHLY REPORT of Schools, Teachers, Societies, Pupils, and Buildings, called for by Circular Letter of October 6, 1868, from Commissioner Bureau R., F., and A. L. State of Virginia, Month of March, 1869.

Location of School.	Name of Teacher.	Under what patronage.	No. Pupils.	No. Buildings.	Owner of Building.
Montgomery Co:					
School No. 1	L. Eastman & A. Bowman	N. Y. B. F. & M. C.	150	1	Freedmen
Nottoway Co					
Burkeville	Eulalia J. Clark	N. Y. Friends	77	1	Freedmen
Nansemond Co					
Suffolk	Mrs. S. A. Bowman	N. Y. F. F. Assoc	58	1	G. W. Thomas
Northumberland Co.					
Colby Sch.	C. F. Putnam.	N. Y. F. F. Assoc	35	1	Freedmen
Northampton Co					
Armstrong Sch.	A. J. Montgomery	A. M. Soc.	16	1	" "
Lincoln "	R. C. E. Pitts M. J. Bowen	" "	93	1	" "

Asst.-Com., and Supt. Education.

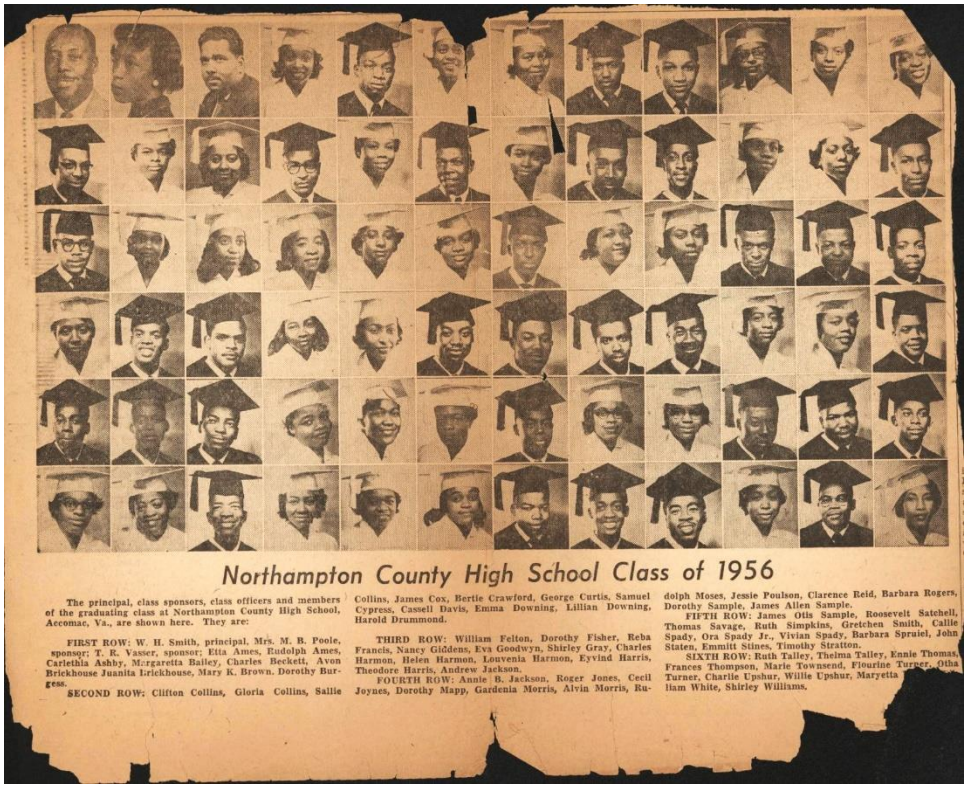
Image source: National Archives, 4688408. The Lincoln School had 93 students in 1869. The Armstrong School was in Onancock, which is in Accomack County (p. 40 of Landmarks).

Most of the new students were also new to freedom. They brought with them few academic skills and the buildings that housed their first scholarly experiences were drafty old places, sometimes little more than shacks.

In 1870, a public school system was created in Virginia for both African American and White students. Some of the schools that had been held in churches immediately after the Civil War now became public schools. Nonetheless, the idea that "to educate a Negro is to spoil a laborer" prevailed among the White leadership throughout the South. African American children were viewed as inferior and carried the stigma of enslavement. Because of these and other issues, schools for African American children were funded at very low levels.

In 1915, Northampton County had five accredited White high schools. There were no high schools for African American children in the county until 1935. The average number of White pupils per teacher was 24; the average number of African American pupils was 58. The White per capita cost of instruction in the elementary grades was $9.25. The per capita cost of instruction for African American children was $5.40, littler more than half of the amount for the White children.

Machipongo Elementary School and Northampton County High School – In the fall of 1935, the Northampton County School System took over the bankrupt Tidewater Institute at Cobb Station and for the first time provided secondary education to African American children. This was the first year for Northampton County High School and it continued at the Tidewater Institute campus for six years. In the fall of 1941, Northampton County High School was moved to Machipongo to a school, now demolished, built for White children. The school was placed under the direction of J.F. Banks, who served as principal from 1937 to 1948. William H. Smith became principal of the high school in the fall of 1948 and served until 1967. At that time, it was called Machipongo High School. In 1954 (*note the marker says 1953)*, a new high school was built next to the old Machipongo building, which became a consolidated elementary school for the children attending elementary schools in the central part of Northampton County. In time, an annex was built to accommodate increasing numbers of children attending Machipongo Elementary School. After several years, the old Machipongo school was demolished and the central office for Northampton County School Board was moved from Eastville to the Machipongo Elementary School.



Northampton County High School Class of 1956

The principal, class sponsors, class officers and members of the graduating class at Northampton County High School, Accomac, Va., are shown here. They are:

FIRST ROW: W. H. Smith, principal, Mrs. M. B. Poole, sponsor; T. R. Vassier, sponsor; Etta Ames, Rudolph Ames, Carlethia Ashby, Margaretta Bailey, Charles Beckett, Avon Brickhouse Juanita Brickhouse, Mary K. Brown, Dorothy Burgess.

SECOND ROW: Clifton Collins, Gloria Collins, Sallie Collins, James Cox, Bertie Crawford, George Curtis, Samuel Cypress, Cassell Davis, Emma Downing, Lillian Downing, Harold Drummond.

THIRD ROW: William Felton, Dorothy Fisher, Reba Francis, Nancy Giddens, Eva Goodwyn, Shirley Gray, Charles Harmon, Helen Harmon, Louvenia Harmon, Eyvind Harris, Theodore Harris, Andrew Jackson.

FOURTH ROW: Annie B. Jackson, Roger Jones, Cecil Joynes, Dorothy Mapp, Gardenia Morris, Alvin Morris, Rudolph Moses, Jessie Poulson, Clarence Reid, Barbara Rogers, Dorothy Sample, James Allen Sample.

FIFTH ROW: James Otis Sample, Roosevelt Satchell, Thomas Savage, Ruth Simpkins, Gretchen Smith, Callie Spady, Ora Spady Jr., Vivian Spady, Barbara Spruiel, John Staten, Emmitt Stines, Timothy Stratton.

SIXTH ROW: Ruth Talley, Thelma Talley, Ennie Thomas, Frances Thompson, Marie Townsend, Flourine Turner, Otha Turner, Charlie Upshur, Willie Upshur, Maryetta [illegible] liam White, Shirley Williams.

Source: Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

Directions: Turn right back onto Young Road and drive to Bayside Road. Turn right. Drive about 3 miles. The church is on your left.

Note: Historic Hungars Episcopal Church is across the street a little past Shorter's Chapel. It served as the Anglican Church during the Colonial era. It still has a balcony that seated enslaved workers during the services until emancipation.

Stop 10. Community Infrastructure: Repurposing as Needs Change

Location: Bridgetown School and Shorter's Chapel, 10228 Bayside Rd, Machipongo.

Bridgetown Elementary School was one of the first schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau in Northampton County after the Civil War. In 1867, Bridgetown School trustees James Jacob, Peter Palmer, William Stratton, Ephram Stevens, and James Harmon purchased an acre of land from James Toy. Shorter's Chapel was one of the churches organized by Reverend John H. Offer circa 1870 during his tenure as the first African American Methodist minister on the Shore. It was named for the A.M.E. Bishop James A. Shorter.

Shorter's Chapel building was originally occupied by Bridgetown School. A cornerstone records the year 1883 as the year the church was constructed, but it seems likely that the Shorter's Chapel congregation predates the cornerstone and that the cornerstone actually records the building of the first addition to the church. Over the years, the church added onto the original building, increasing the size of the church over the original foundation. In 1896, the Bridgetown School trustees executed a deed of gift and gave Shorter's Chapel the school and a lot 20 x 30 feet.

In 1896, Bridgetown School trustees exchanged land with Laban Belote for land on the north side of Bayside Road. Although a deed of gift from the trustees of the Bridgetown Elementary School transferred the ownership of the Shorter's Chapel property in 1896, the cornerstone of the church dated 1883, together with the oral history of the church, confirms that the transfer of property was but a legal formality. The Bridgetown School had moved before 1883, and Shorter's Chapel occupied this space thirteen years before the deed was executed.

Directions: Head back south (right) on Bayside Road. Drive 1.5 miles. Turn left onto Johnson Town Road and drive .7 miles. Turn right onto Treherneville Drive and the destination will be on your right.

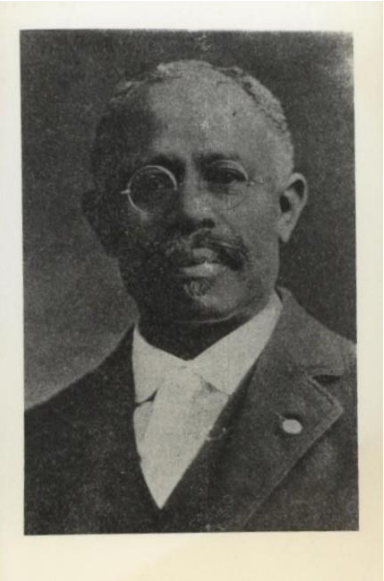
Stop 11. Independent Communities: Unincorporated Towns

Location: Trehereneville, New Mission United Methodist Church, 8248 Treherneville Dr, Birdsnest (site chosen for an easy parking area)

Frances Bibbins Latimer's book, "Life For Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair," excerpts the autobiography of Leonard Treherne. The genesis of Treherneville is excerpted here: "I left Northampton in 1871 and went to school. I returned to Virginia to take part in the Readjuster and Republican Coalition Party; and was made postmaster at Bridgetown, Virginia…When the State Conference was

called in Norfolk to take in consideration the Danville Riot Case, I was a delegate from Northampton County, in company with A.S. West and Peter J. Carter. *(note: Carter is discussed on stop 13).* At the close of the Readjuster administration, I lost the Post-Office position….I organized the Northampton Land Development Company (chartered 1901), out of which grew Treherneville, Virginia, the town in which I live."

Born in 1857, Leonard Treherne was the son of Robert Treherne who was born into enslavement in 1825. With nineteen other individuals, including Robert's mother, Elmira Saunders (born 1810), he was owned by Curtis Treherne. In 1855, Robert (also known as Robin) married a free Negro, Elizabeth Church (born 1832), daughter of Lyttleton and Louisa Church. Because his mother was a "free Negro," Leonard was never enslaved and during his early life, before the end of the Civil War, he and members of this family lived in close proximity to the Treherne plantation. Leonard Treherne died on December 24, 1924. *(Source: "Life For Me Ain't Been No Crystal Stair," p. 66).*



Leonard Treherne (1957-1924)
Source: Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

The Mallie Movie House, formerly on Route 13, was built on land purchased by Robert Treherne. Many people will recognize this site as Bob's Place and, in later years, as Bo-Bo's Place, two local watering holes. Originally, the Mallie Theatre was a part of this complex, located on Route 13 to the south of Isaac Horton's Cleaning and Pressing Plant, a gas station, and a store.

Named for Delegate Peter J. Carter's daughter, Mallie Carter Johnson (d.1937), a teacher at Tidewater Institute, poet, and social worker, the Mallie was one of several businesses owned

by the Treherne family. The youths of the 1940s tell of saving their money each week for a trip to the Mallie on Saturday night.

Directions: Turn east/left on Treherneville Road and return to Johnston Town Road. Turn right and drive 2 miles. Turn right on Bayside Road and drive 1 mile. Turn right on Bayford Road. The destination is on the right.

Stop 12. Weirwood Fair & Giddens' Do Drop Inn

Giddens' Do Drop Inn, 8204 Bayford Rd., Weirwood

The Weirwood Fair, was sponsored by the Central Northampton Agricultural Industrial Fair Association. The Fair Association board purchased two plots of land in Weirwood, one in 1926 and one in 1927. A day at the fairgrounds included harness races at the track; concessions of food and novelties; games of chance at pitching pennies and knocking down pins for a prize; carnival rides of swings, the merry-go-round, the Ferris wheel; and the agricultural/industrial exhibits. At the end of the day, every child's dream was to still be at the fair and awake to see beautiful fireworks illuminate the sky.

The Weirwood Fair was held in the second week of August and the third week in Tasley. Carnival ride vendors were then able to serve both Fairs while on the Shore. The ferris wheel was a highlight. Expatriates would come back to the Shore for these Fairs to visit with family and friends. Churches and community groups would have tents for vending. Benches stretched the middle of the rows of tents for visitors to sit, mingle, and partake of the homemade foods that were sold. The Fair also had a dance hall that brought in "brand" name groups from out of town.

The Weirwood Fair was chartered April 24, 1925. The Fair Association had a board of trustees that invested in the land, namely: Alfonzo Fitchett, Luther Francis, Walter Jefferson, Pack Bracy, Jr., Henderson Savage, Charles N. McCune, Dr. Peter Carter, C.U. Sisco, and W.C. Brown. Liquor license application legal notices in the 1930's by W.C. Brown and Langdon C. Morris (a later trustee) verify that beer was sold at the Fair.

Horse racing was a big attraction, drawing harness racers from as far away as Suffolk. The fairgrounds had a large grandstand. The racetrack infield is still visible in aerial photographs.

Oval racetrack infield is still visible in aerial views.
Source: Northampton County tax record.

Weirwood was quite populated in the early part of the twentieth century, as it was one of the railroad stops and on Route 13. The African American side of the hamlet is on the western side of Route 13 along Bayford Road, which was previously called New Road. George Treherne's night spot closer to Route 13 had a baseball field in back, also still visible in aerial photos. Giddens' Do Drop Inn, built by Lloyd Henry Giddens, Sr. opened as a restaurant and lounge in 1967 and remains in operation.

The Weirwood Fair came to an end in the mid-1960s. Later, on June 26, 1981, the Central Northampton Agricultural Industrial Fair Association was officially dissolved. Recently, the fairgrounds were sold, with the proceeds distributed among the descendants of the trustee shareholders. *(Source: Interview with Jane Cabarrus, owner of Giddens' Do Drop Inn)*

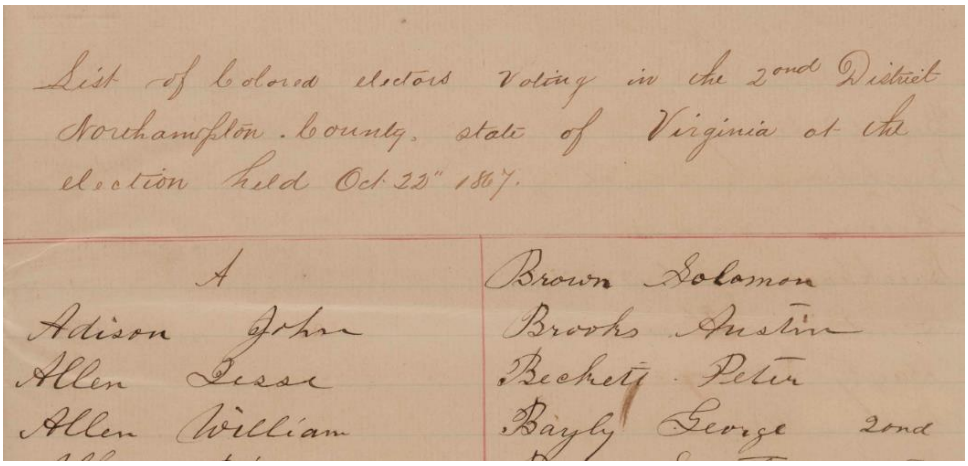
Directions: Return to Bayside Road and turn right. Head north one mile. The Church is on your left.

Stop 13. Politics: Representation During Reconstruction

Location: Bethel Baptist Church, 7638 Bayside Rd, Franktown

After the Civil War, African Americans had the freedom to establish their own places of worship. Franktown's Bethel Baptist Church was organized in 1882 and built on property donated by the Honorable Peter J. Carter. The cemetery is named in his honor. He is buried nearby in a family plot.

Carter was born into enslavement in the town of Eastville, in Northampton County, on May 29, 1845. Carter, a younger brother and sister, and their mother belonged to Calvin H. Read, a school teacher who may have taught Carter to read. By 1858 Calvin Read had moved to Baltimore. To repay $1,000 he had borrowed from his wife's separate estate, he deeded to her on December 5, 1860 enslaved property: Carter, two of his siblings, and their mother, all enumerated in the deed as residing in Northampton County. Carter was enslaved at the Read plantation in Machipongo, called Jeffersonia. Ironically, Carter later owned this property and sold it in 1881 to the school district to become the two-room Readtown Elementary School.



List of Colored electors Voting in the 2ond District Northampton County, State of Virginia at the election held Oct 22" 1867.

A		Brown	Solomon
Adison	John	Brooks	Austin
Allen	Jesse	Beckett	Peter
Allen	William	Bayly	George 2ond

Excerpt from "List of Colored Electors voting in the 2nd District, Northampton County, State of Virginia, at elections held Oct 22, 1867". Source: "Virginia Untold," Library of Virginia.

Carter escaped from enslavement and then served for more than two years with the U.S. Colored Infantry. In 1871 he won election as a Republican to the House of Delegates representing Northampton County. He was reelected three more times, and his eight-year tenure was one of the longest among nineteenth-century African American members of the General Assembly. Carter was a Funder Republican—that is, he supported the aggressive repayment of Virginia's antebellum debt—a rare position for an African American politician. Conservatives gerrymandered Carter out of his district ahead of the 1879 elections, and he lost his bid for a seat in the Senate of Virginia. He retained much of his political power, dispensing federal patronage and chairing the state's delegation to the Republican National Convention in 1880. He left the party to join William Mahone's Readjusters, a Republican-allied coalition that sought to readjust Virginia's payment of its antebellum debt. Carter was rewarded for his support by being elected doorkeeper of the Senate of Virginia in 1881 and appointed rector of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (later Virginia State University) in 1883. *Source: Revolutionary Shore driving tour.*

Directions: Head north on Bayside Road 0.5 miles. Turn right onto Franktown Road and drive 0.8 miles. Turn left onto Hospital Avenue. Drive .5 miles to the corner of Rogers Drive. The 1928 NAM hospital was on the corner of Rogers drive and Hospital Avenue. The current Riverside Family Medicine building is located on what was the front drive and lawn. The 1972 NAM/Riverside hospital (demolished 2024) was across from Rayfield's Pharmacy.

Stop 14. Healthcare – Doctoring in an Age of Segregation

Northampton Accomack Memorial Hospital, 10098 Rogers Drive, Nassawadox

Rural health care has been a challenge since the Colonists brought European medical practices to the Americas. For hospital care, Eastern Shore residents and visitors had to go to Norfolk, which required ferry transport, or Salisbury, Maryland. While the Freedmen's Bureau did establish some hospitals, the

distance and cost to travel proved a big barrier to Northampton African Americans. Limited medical services were provided by the county almshouse physician to residents, some of whom were African American, until it closed in 1952. Since it was created in 1954, the Northampton County Health Department (part of the Virginia Department of Health) provides some rural medical services, such as immunizations, maternity care, and tuberculosis treatment, to all citizens.

The first hospital to be built on the Eastern Shore of Virginia was the Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital (NAMH) in Nassawadox. It was built in 1928 as a memorial to soldiers killed during World War I. Like all public facilities at the time, the hospital was segregated. The wards for the African American patients were in the basement. African American physicians could not provide services in the hospital.

Northampton Accomack Memorial Hospital, built 1928
Source: Dr. John Robertson Collection, Shore History

The hospital did employ African Americans as orderlies and aides, cooks and maintenance staff, and then later on as physicians and nurses. Opportunities increased as the facility racially integrated, making it a good source of employment in an agricultural community with few other career options. The second hospital, built in 1971, was fully integrated as new laws were in place by that time.

Historically, before the hospital, African Americans had little access to professional medical care. That changed in 1904, when Dr. Palmer began practicing medicine in Cape Charles.

Daniel Webster Palmer, M.D. was the first African American physician to serve the African American community on the Eastern Shore. Born on April 15, 1897 in Hendersonville, North Carolina, Palmer matriculated at Leonard School of Medicine (Shaw University) in Raleigh, North Carolina, and graduated in 1904. After graduation, he moved to the Eastern Shore and established his medical practice in the town of Cape Charles, practicing for twenty-eight years.

Another Leonard School graduate was **Charles Martin Read, M.D.**, from Jamaica, West Indies. Dr. Read was registered by Northampton County to practice medicine and in 1916 purchased an acre of land in the town of Hare Valley. There, at 6131 Bayside Road, he constructed a building that would serve as his home and office.

William Henderson Johnson, M.D. attended Tidewater Institute, graduated from Virginia Union University in 1924 and then from Meharry Medical College. Dr. Johnson opened his first office in Cape Charles, Virginia in 1929. Shortly thereafter, he married Helen Mapp, a teacher at Tidewater Institute. When he was denied membership in the Eastern Shore Medical Society, he became charter member of the African American Delmarva Medical Society. He was also denied the opportunity to treat his patients in the Northampton-Accomack Hospital in Nassawadox (*which opened in 1928)*, an exclusion for which there was no recourse. In 1942, Johnson returned to Pennsylvania. He died in 1989 at the age of 88.

James Calvin (J.C.) Allen, M.D. was born in Eastville on October 28, 1909. He attended local elementary schools and went to Tidewater Institute, graduating in 1929. In his youth, local African American physicians, Dr. Charles M. Read and **Dr. Charles Walker,** were role models for Allen. In 1933, he entered Howard University Medical School in Washington, D.C. After interning at Mercy Hospital in Philadelphia, Dr. Allen returned to the Eastern Shore in 1938. For the first three years of his career, he practiced medicine in Hare Valley in the office of one of his heroes, Dr. Charles Read. He quickly became a vital part of the community treating both African American and White patients on a "first come, first served basis." Allen made house calls, saw patients at the county jail and health department, and delivered babies at Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital. Later he also served as a medical examiner for Northampton County. In 1942, Allen moved his medical practice to Eastville, on Route 13, which included a laboratory. Dr. Allen retired in 1983. He died on September 8, 1985.

The 1928 hospital was demolished in 1971 after a new hospital was built adjacent to the south. In 2017, a new hospital was built in Onancock in Accomack County, moving hospital services about twenty miles north. The 1971 hospital was demolished in 2024. Today, Northampton's African American residents not only benefit from a state-of-the art hospital, but are served by diverse medical professionals, are employed in the health care industry, and have more educational opportunities to become doctors and nurses.

Directions: Turn left and head west on Rogers Drive. Note a cemetery and church on the left. Turn right onto Bayside Road.

On this corner is New Allen AME Church, mentioned previously and at the next stop. It has a very interesting cemetery with many veterans buried there.

Head north on Bayside Road 1.5 miles. The school, now Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging and Headstart, is on your left.

Stop 15. Banking on Community Growth

Hare Valley Elementary School, 10098 Rogers Dr, Nassawadox, VA 23413

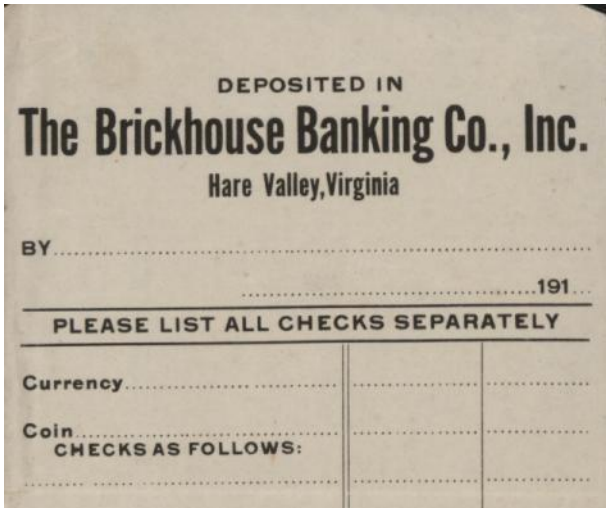
Three schools have served the Hare Valley area. The first school opened under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau in about 1868. The small red building sat on the east side of the Bayside Road north of T.B. Road (just north of here). The school closed in 1910, but the building survived into the 1930s.

The second school was sponsored by the People's School of Northampton County, a group of African Americans acting as a school board for African Americans' education in Hare Valley. In 1909, William H. and Janie Brickhouse sold one acre of land to Chester A. Harmon, William H. Mathews, William H. Brickhouse, Joseph Church, Thomas O. Gladstone, Reuben B. Upshur, and Lloyd Wilson, trustees of the People's School of Northampton County, District Number 3. This land was located in Hare Valley on what is now the northwest corner of Bayside Road and Milton Ames Drive. Chester Allen Harmon, a trustee, was one of the first teachers to work at Hare Valley School. The building was destroyed by fire in 1948. The cohesiveness of the Hare Valley community can be seen in the New Allen Memorial Church (7044 Bayside Rd) members' provision of space for children needing a school.

In 1949, the Northampton County School Board decided to build a new school for African American children in Hare Valley and allocated $100,000.00 for it. Also in 1949, the Northampton County School Board purchased twelve adjoining acres from Arnett and Thessa Downing. Hare Valley School closed in 1993, when the new elementary school opened near Exmore.

Hare Valley School served the County through integration. One of Hare Valley School's alumni was Calvin L. Brickhouse who became principal of Northampton County High School in 1968, helping to shepherd the County through integration. Today, the Hare Valley school continues to serve as the home of Project Head Start Program and the Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging/Community Action Agency, a senior service organization.

Brickhouse Banking Company (approximately 6126 Bayside Road) - A Certificate of Incorporation was issued to the Brickhouse Banking Company in 1910. The principal place of business was in Hare Valley in Northampton County. The bank was formed to conduct general banking business. By law, the capital stock of the bank was not to be less than $10,000.00 ($332,215.00 at today's rate) and not to exceed $50,000.000, divided in shares at a value of $5.00.


DEPOSITED IN
The Brickhouse Banking Co., Inc.
Hare Valley, Virginia
BY.....
.....191...
PLEASE LIST ALL CHECKS SEPARATELY
Currency.....
Coin.....
CHECKS AS FOLLOWS:

Source: Francis Bibbins Latimer Collection, Eastern Shore of Virginia Heritage Center

Melvin J. Chisum, a stock speculator born in Texas, but living in Norfolk, helped organize the bank and served as its first president. The other bank officers were: Reuben B. Upshur of Hare Valley, Vice President; Jacob H. Griffith of Eastville, second Vice President; Charles J. Brickhouse of Hare Valley, Secretary; and Taylor D. Jefferson of Cape Charles, Treasurer. Other bank directors were: William H. Brickhouse and Peter Bivins, both of Hare Valley and B.T. Coard of Accomack Court House. In 1911, William H. and Janie Brickhouse deeded four acres of land for the bank's use. The Brickhouse Banking Company served the African-American community until 1916. Later, the brick bank building was used as a dwelling. As years went on, it fell into disrepair and no longer exists.

Read House (6131 Bayside Road) – Dr. Charles Martin Read came to the United States from Jamaica, British West Indies, in 1903. In 1912, Northampton County certified him to practice medicine in Virginia. In 1916, he purchased one acre of land from James and Ann Kelley. The house built there served as his home and office.

When George E. Downing, one of the Shores first African American attorneys, returned home from college to practice law, this was his office. This building also served as office space for Dr. James C. Allen in 1939 and Dr. Conway Downing in 1945.

Directions: Turn left onto Bayside Road and continue north 1.5 miles to Route 13. Cross over the highway at the light and turn left onto Main Street (Business Route 13). Travel 1 mile north into Exmore. Turn right onto Willis Wharf Road (Route 603). In 220 feet, turn left onto Front Street. The railway depot is on your right.

Stop 16. Employment: Changing from Agriculture to the Age of Industry

Location: Exmore railway depot, 3306 Front Street, Exmore

Dulaney, Grader Sheds, and the Shirt Factory - African Americans' opportunities for employment changed and diversified after Emancipation, especially for formerly enslaved workers. On the Shore, work shifted from agricultural fieldwork to more skilled and industrial jobs. Travel opportunities, as well as transportation infrastructure, grew.

The railroad expanded opportunities for everyone on the Shore when it arrived in the 1880's. The laying of the rails provided manual labor jobs. After completion of the railroad, African Americans worked in a variety of railway positions, including firemen, track maintainers, porters, dining car waiters, and station ushers. One can imagine the differences they saw when their work took them north, out of the Jim Crow South. Railway employment not only opened doors, but also eyes and ears. Opportunities in less segregated northern communities became more accessible.

Along with the railroad came new towns. Belle Haven, Exmore, Nassawadox, Birdsnest, Weirwood, Machipongo, Cheriton, and Cape Charles sprang up almost overnight as the rails were laid. Farmers and watermen brought their produce and seafood to these stations. Soon after, communities grew around these rail stops. Barrel factories made barrels to ship product long distances. Shops, restaurants, and accommodations served visitors, tourists enjoying the barrier island hunt clubs, salesmen, business prospectors, and agricultural brokers. These new businesses employed African Americans as laborers and cleaners.

This is the site of Exmore Station, Number X (10), on the NYP&N (Eastern Shore) line. The town started as Exmore Station around 1884, which was its name into the early 20th century. Today it is the largest town in Northampton County. Exmore was one of the largest employers on the Eastern Shore, providing employment for African Americans on the railroad, at Dulany's food processing plant, in the "grader sheds" grading, packing, and loading produce. If you look north, "up the tracks," you would have seen the large Dulany factory. The large corrugated metal building to the east is the remaining grader shed of MJ Duer, one of the largest produce brokers in the area during the 50s and 60s.

During the railroad days, Exmore became an important distribution and transportation hub due to its central location and proximity to produce and seafood producers. Later, as automobiles and trucking became popular, Exmore became one of the towns on the Ocean Highway, the 1,000 mile highway stretching from US 1 in New Jersey to Florida. Exmore's Main Street, now known as Business Route 13, was part of that highway system. Automobiles and commercial - segregated - buses provided transportation options for African Americans.

Exmore soon grew beyond a rail station for shipping produce. The town was a host for many produce brokers and packing businesses, most notably J.H. Dulany and Sons freezer plant, built in 1938. The plant covered five-acres and increasingly thrived into World War II with its canning and freezing production. By 1950, Dulany's employed 400 people, making it the largest employer in town. In 1975, Dulany's was sold to Exmore Foods, which operated until 1980. The County lost a large employer. The physical plant no longer exists as it later burned.

Women working at the Exmore Shirt Factory
Source: "Open House at the Exmore Shirt Factory," Peninsula Enterprise, Aug. 27, 1953, Virginia Chronicle

In 1953, a shirt factory, initially employing 100 people, opened on Broad Street, which provided many African Americans steady, year-round employment. It closed in the late 1980's, creating another employment loss in the town.

Seasonal agricultural work did not provide a steady paycheck. Industrial work was year-round, adding stability and more opportunities for advancement. New Ravenna, an artistic mosaic design and manufacturing firm, now operates out of the shirt factory building, employing a new generation of workers.

Like many Southern small towns, African Americans were marginalized, usually residing outside of the town limits. Hamlets of African American homes and shops started, and still exist, across the tracks from downtown Exmore and on the westside of town, by the highway. All up and down the Eastern Shore, these hamlets tended to spring up where the employment was, resulting in African Americans migrating from farmsteads into railroad towns. This helped them develop their own businesses, churches, lodges, and schools.

In the later part of the 20th century, young people from rural communities across the nation left for higher education and new job opportunities. This County is no exception, but many expatriates returned later in their careers or to retire to be with their families and homesteads. The County's jobs changed, along with the visual structures associated with them. African Americans continue to reimagine their future and adjust to this landscape.

Directions: Turn around and turn left onto Willis Wharf Road and drive east 2 miles to 5081 Willis Wharf Road. There is a seaside overlook in the parking lot at the county wharf.

On behalf of the Northampton Virginia250 Local Commission, we hope you have enjoyed this trail excursion and learned a bit about the African American story of independence. Hopefully, it has piqued your interest to learn and research more, as well as, support the preservation of historic sites.

As you look out to the Atlantic Ocean from this last stop on the trail and contemplate the journey of many from the African shores, we share some closing thoughts from Dr. Paul Bibbins, the brother of Frances Bibbins Latimer.

Stop 17. Telling the Story: Documenting African American History

By Paul E. Bibbins, Jr., PhD, DHL (Hon)

Willis Wharf public boat landing, 5081 Willis Wharf Road, Willis Wharf

The "Landmarks: Black Historic Sites in Northampton County Self-Guided Driving Trail "is a way to learn more about African American historical sites in Northampton County on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The Tour is based on the reference, Landmarks: Black Historic Sites on the Eastern Shore of Virginia by Frances Bibbins Latimer.

Why was the Landmarks: Black Historic Sites on the Eastern Shore of Virginia by Frances Bibbins Latimer publication used as the reference source for the Trail?

Latimer had a deep appreciation for the Eastern Shore and for history. She wanted to document local African American stories so that they would not be forgotten, and given their rightful place in history. Latimer began her own publishing company, Hickory House, from her home in Eastville. She would meet with community members, hear their stories, and then visit the Northampton County courthouse, home to the United States' longest continual court records, to confirm as many details as she could through public records. She published many books, including Landmarks, the first book ever written to share the history of African American historic sites on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Following Latimer's career as an educator in New York, she and her husband George relocated back to the Eastern Shore. Initially, Latimer took an interest in learning more about the genealogy of her family. She spent countless hours talking with her parents, Paul and Lillie Bibbins, her maternal and paternal grandparents, as well as other family members and community members. Latimer found that there were not any published documents about African Americans on the Eastern Shore. As is the case in a majority of instances, family Bibles are the only histories we have of the African American family. Along with her numerous interviews, her research took her to the Clerks Office of the Northampton County Circuit Court. As Latimer delved into the genealogy of her family, she saw that there were many facets of Eastern Shore African American history that should and needed to be documented for the general population. Based on the genealogical review of her family, Latimer published, The Journey of a Multiracial Family: Six Generations of the Eastern Shore Francis Family. Since there was no recorded history of African Americans on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Latimer cataloged all of the headstones at Union Baptist Church (July 1865), the oldest African American Church on the Eastern Shore.

As Latimer's genealogical work became popular on the Eastern Shore, she spoke at numerous activities, assisting other citizens of the Eastern Shore in documenting the history of their families. Latimer published numerous literary works about the history of the Eastern Shore. Every day, she saw various people and landmarks on the Shore that needed to be recorded in order to document and preserve the history of the Eastern Shore. As an active member of her community, Latimer was passionate about sharing African American history and how it impacts the Eastern Shore, and its relevance to the total history of Virginia's Eastern Shore. By far the biggest project tackled by Latimer was the research, writing, and publication of Landmarks: Black Historic Sites on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. "Landmarks" is the first publication devoted solely to documenting African American historical sites in Northampton and Accomack Counties. "Landmarks" documented African American schools, churches, businesses, and lodges on the Eastern Shore. Latimer realized that it was something that needed to be done to preserve the rich history of the African American community on the Eastern Shore.

The Landmarks Trail is just an introduction to what life has been like through the years for African Americans in Northampton County on Virginia's Eastern Shore. The Trail Stops included in this Tour are just a fraction of the noteworthy African American sites in Northampton County. African Americans from all walks of life—farmers, teachers, general store managers, funeral directors, lawyers, electricians, doctors, plumbers, professional athletes, etc.—have played a part in making the Eastern Shore what it is today. "Black" and White, enslaved and free, rich and poor lived and worked in close proximity on the Shore. Inequality was extreme, and daily life could be challenging.

The citizens of Northampton and Accomack Counties posthumously thank Frances Bibbins Latimer for having the foresight and initiative to publish Landmarks: Black Historic Sites on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Let us take this opportunity to express our gratitude to you for taking the "Landmarks: Black Historic Sites in Northampton County Self-Guided Driving Trail" to learn more about African American historical sites in Northampton County. We encourage you to venture beyond the sites highlighted in the Trail and learn more about the other noteworthy sites in Northampton County.

A closing thought, if Latimer had not had the foresight to write Landmarks, a significant amount of the African American history on the Eastern Shore would be lost forever. Explore beyond the Trail's highlights to discover more of Northampton County's hidden gems. Thank you.

We appreciate your taking the time to explore the local history and landscape of Northampton County. The Landmarks Trail is one of our Virginia250 commemorative events. We hope that the Trail inspires you to help carry the torch Frances Bibbins Latimer lit and continue the research and writing.

The Northampton County Virginia250 Local Commission

Project Committee Members: Cara Burton, Chair; Paul E. Bibbins, Jr., PhD, DHL (Hon); Gerald Boyd, MDiv; Jazmine Collins; Brenda Holden, PhD; James McDaniel, MD, MSHA; Mrs. Ruth Walker

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