



# Somerset County Historical Trust **Tribune**

*Preserving the Legacy of Somerset County*

## **Annual Meeting 2022**

Our annual meeting on September 24th at Charlotte and Jim Sharf's historic home "The Reward" was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and to honor special preservationists. Attendance exceeded all prior records.

Our current Board officers were all re-elected for 2023 and our two newest members — Lisa Challenger with Beach to Bay Heritage Area and Skip Colborn from Princess Anne — have generously added their talents to our busy team.



*Charlotte Sharf with  
Woody Howard*



*Randy George with  
Candice Ridlon*



*Regina Bell with  
John Donohue & Dixie Ster-*



*Regina Bell with  
Warner Sumpter*

## **Preservation Awards 2022**



### **OUTSTANDING RESTORATION OF AN HISTORIC PROPERTY**

- 🌀 Woody Howard, Master Craftsman
- 🌀 Dr. Candice Ridlon for the William T. Tull House, Westover
- 🌀 Jack Donohue and Dixie Sterling for Watkins Point Farm, Marion Station

### **COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP**

- 🌀 Warner Sumpter - Princess Anne



# Highlights

2022

## OUR ACTIVITIES THIS YEAR

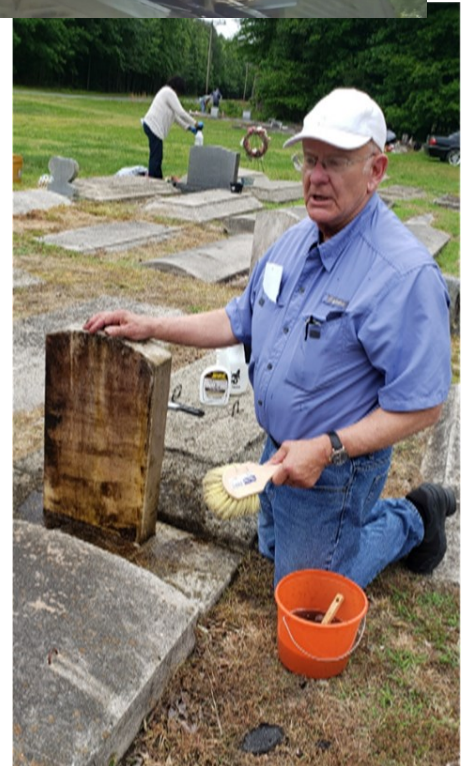
We continue to partner with the **Fairmount Academy Association** and successfully obtained a second grant to pay for new roofs on the two Academy buildings. Fairmount has now obtained its own 501c3 tax status and will be able to apply on its own for future grants.



The **Mt. Zion Church** on Polks Road in Venton received a much-needed new roof this year, thanks to private donations garnered by the Trust. And in November, we also were successful in obtaining an \$86,000 grant for serious internal repairs from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, which the Trust will administer on behalf of the Mt. Zion Historical Association.



In May, Preservation Maryland led a **grave cleaning and restoration workshop** at the Mt. Zion Church cemetery. Over 20 members of the Trust and general public attended this informative program and utilized tools & supplies for hands-on cleaning of many of the headstones and markers.





Since the fire that destroyed historic Panther's Denn (c1710), Chairman Randy and several Trust volunteers have been working diligently to **salvage the bricks** that survived the fire. It has taken countless wheelbarrow trips to transport them to a secure location where volunteers chip away to remove the mortar, then sort and stack them.

Work will continue through next year and the goal is to offer the cleaned bricks to preservationists seeking correct historic brick for restoration projects.

Salvage material inventory is listed on



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Our most recent news is the signing of a contract to purchase the long-neglected **Glebe House** (also known as the Chase House) located just south of Princess Anne off of Route 13.

The old home is one of the most well-known relics of our county's past and we intend to save it for future generations.

Your interest and help with this project will be essential in the coming months. We'll keep you informed as the project proceeds in our newsletter and by email.



# Architectural History of Somerset

## Mid to Late 19th century

The Eastern Shore region entered a distinct period of economic, social and political change during the middle of the 19th century that reshaped the agrarian and minor industrial society of Somerset County. Prior to the Civil War, the area continued to be

prosperous and benefited from introduction of steam power technology, methods of preserving and canning fruits, vegetables and oysters for shipping, and establishment of a railroad connecting the county to major urban areas rather than relying on water transportation.

During the Civil War, Maryland was considered a border state with divided loyalties, but with its essentially Southern plantation economy the lower Eastern Shore generally aligned with the Southern cause. During the war, there were no battles directly fought here but the region was considered strategic.

One year after the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves were officially freed in the state of Maryland in 1864. Somerset County was split a second time in 1867 to create Wicomico County, but despite this reduction in size the area continued to prosper with expanded markets and improved transportation. Former enslaved workers became tenants or sharecroppers, who were given a portion of a yearly harvest or a house on the property.



Portion of map 1877 Atlas of the Eastern Shore  
Source: <http://www.mdgenweb.org/somerset/images/lwrshore.jpg>

The oyster industry began greatly to expand in the Chesapeake region in the 1880s as a response to depleted oyster beds in New England and the invention of the dredge. With the advent of commercial canning, Crisfield developed numerous fruit and oyster packing houses supplying goods by rail and steamboat, and became one of the fastest growing cities in Maryland.

Princess Anne was no longer on navigable water but was served by the railroad and the town was able to expand. The Beckford and Teackle acreage was partitioned into numerous building lots and by the end of the 19th century the population of Princess Anne had reached 1,000.

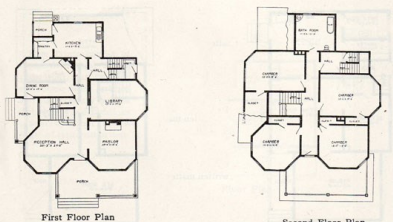
Smaller villages, such as Upper Fairmount, evolved to serve the surrounding agricultural communities. Two small black settlements of Upper and Lower Freetown expanded between 1865 and 1877, and the watermen's villages of Frenchtown and Rumbley developed during this period. In the northern part of the county, Mount Vernon was founded on the Wicomico River and other towns grew along the rail line, such as Eden, Loretto, Westover, Kingston, Marion and Hopewell.

During the second half of the 19th century, new popular styles of architecture were introduced and standardized mass-produced building materials became widely available. In spite of these new trends, Somerset tended to hold onto its conservative and longstanding traditions of vernacular building. Construction and design manuals were readily available with the latest Victorian styles - Italianate, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne Revival styles - but local builders typically stuck to more familiar house designs with trim or other details in the new styles. Only a few Somerset residents were adventurous enough to build an entire house wholly in one of the new styles.



Design No. 7075

Size: Width, 43 feet, Length, 49 feet, exclusive of porch



First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan

Seth Venables was a mid-19th century house builder who constructed many of the houses on the newly divided lots surrounding the Teackle Mansion. The William Lecates home was built in a typical vernacular style of the mid 19th century – a two story, narrow three bay rectangular house with central hallway - but has Greek Revival exterior and interior details. Many of the building elements were mass produced rather than handmade by the builder.



*William Lecates House c 1852-53  
photo credit: Paul Touart*

Venable’s own home just north of the Teackle Mansion used another vernacular side hall/parlor plan with a mixture of late Federal and Greek Revival woodwork. Another home is the Levin T.H. Irving house with a similar side hall/parlor plan but with the temple or gable-front design and decorative central window influenced by the Teackle Mansion.



*Judge Levin T.H. Irvin House (Episcopal Rectory) c 1850*

In addition to the numerous Federal and Greek Revival examples in Princess Anne, there are also several homes of Italianate Style – the Rufus Parsons House and the Dennis Dashiell House. The Italianate style, based on an idealized vision of an Italian villa, was popular in England in the



*Rufus Parsons House, c 1858*

1840s and reached the United States twenty years later, modified to suit local interests and aesthetics.

Less expensive building materials and mass production of cast-iron and pressed-metal decorative details allowed modest buyers to now own an Italian villa. Italianate style homes are characterized by several elements: low-pitched or flat roof, rectangular shape of two or more stories, overhanging eaves with brackets and cor-

nices, square cupola, tall, narrow, double-paned windows with moldings, double and pocket interior doors, and arches above windows and doors.

The county has several examples of the Second Empire style – characterized by a distinctive mansard-style roof. The 1853 Levin Woolford House, also built by Seth Vena-



*Levin Woolford House, c 1853 photo: Michael O. Bourne*

## Mid to Late 19th century (cont'd)

bles, exhibits a mansard roof but in every other way has a typical side hall/parlor vernacular style. Another example is the Noah Webster Homeplace, built in Deal Island later during the 1880s.

Gothic Revival, a style imitating medieval castles or churches, is seldom found in our area. The Francis Barnes Farmhouse (now destroyed) was a very humble example with a bit of elaborate trim and gothic arched windows used only in the gable peaks.

Of all the popular styles, perhaps Queen Anne had the greatest influence toward the late 19th century. The most extensive



*Francis Barnes House c 1860 (no longer standing)  
Photo by Daniel Church dated 1967*



*Pauline Crockett House c 1890  
photo credit: Paul Touart*

example of this Queen Anne style, with a three story polygonal tower topped with a bell-shaped roof. This popular style was also used in more rural farmhouses, such as the Adams farmhouse just south of Princess Anne where an existing house was remodeled with Queen Anne features.

collection can be found on the streets of Crisfield.

Queen Anne style is known for its asymmetrical forms and eclectic use of decorative and exuberant features such as towers, wraparound porches, patterned shingles and tall multi-faceted chimneys. The Pauline Crockett house in Crisfield is perhaps the best example, exhibiting most of the features associated with this style.

In Princess Anne, the 1890 Joshua Miles House (now the Hinman Funeral Home) is the most prominent



*Joshua Miles House c 1890  
photo credit: Paul Touart*



*Adams Farm  
photo credit: Paul Touart*



*Fred Henss Farmhouse*

Also born in the late Victorian era was the modest cross-gabled vernacular farmhouse commonly seen in our area. Its style is a long narrow rectangular shape with a prominent gable in the center roof, and a one or two-story service wing off the back. These homes were built extensively across the entire Eastern Shore in the last quarter of the 19th and into the early 20th century and occasionally were attached to earlier dwellings.

In some cases, you'll see the family has moved from the original farmhouse into a trailer home located directly next to the older home. And those that continue to function as residences have been substantially altered.

Although conservative residents adhered to long-standing ideas of how to plan and build a house, most did incorporate some more modern ideas and conveniences, such as the use of iron cooking stoves in the kitchen area. More domestic services were incorporated within the house, such as a pantry or laundry area. This somewhat reduced the number of outbuildings; however there was still the need of a dairy, well, smoke-house and privy. Barns, granaries, and corn cribs continued to be built with some adaptations and occasionally were decorated with stylish trim of the period. And obsolete tobacco barns were commonly refitted for use as granaries.



*Jack Jones House c 1880-1900*

Other types of utilitarian structures were built, such as oyster and fruit packing warehouses and worker housing. Most of these have burned or been demolished, with only a few examples surviving. Other industrial and commercial buildings and mills were built along the railway lines, and a few local 19th century railway stations still exist.



*Old Westover Train Station*

## Mt. Zion Church receives \$86,000 grant

Mt. Zion Church, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was recently awarded a grant with assistance from the Somerset County Historical Trust. The grant for \$86,000 will address mold remediation and interior wall, floor and ceiling restoration.

This grant was funded by The African American Heritage Preservation Grant Program (AAHPP), established in 2010 as a vehicle to encourage the identification and preservation of buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.



AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PRESERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

## Somerset County Historical Trust

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**<http://schtrust.org>**  
**[info@schtrust.org](mailto:info@schtrust.org)**

## It's time to Renew ...

We hope you consider renewing your membership to the Trust  
- which now run on the calendar year.

You can renew online or by mail -- see the enclosed sheet for all  
the details.



## Help spread the word . . .

We thank all of you for your ongoing support of the Trust. You can help us grow our membership by encouraging interested neighbors and friends to become members of the Trust.

Our website **[schtrust.org](http://schtrust.org)** explains the Trust's mission and ongoing work in the areas of preservation and stewardship.