



Somerset County Historical Trust **Tribune**

Preserving the Legacy of Somerset County

..... 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

The Somerset Trust is grateful to Dr. David Medland and Daryl Newhouse for sharing their elegant Beverly estate for our Annual Meeting on September 14.

Their 18th century mansion, located on the outskirts of Princess Anne, is the largest extant plantation house in our region and the former seat of Nehemiah King, a descendent in a long line of wealthy planters in Somerset County. On a beautiful late summer evening, the home's striking Georgian and Palladian features provided an historic backdrop for our dinner meeting.

Over 80 Trust members and guests were in attendance and voted for the slate of executive officers for 2025: Randy George, Chairman; Shawn Carlson, Vice Chairman; Regina Bell, Treasurer; and Gina Gerhard, Recording and Corresponding Secretary.



A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2024 Somerset County Historical Trust Award for Historic Preservation. Our special guests, **Dreanna Belden** and **Dr. Ray Thompson**, were honored as the co-directors of the Trust's most ambitious project, **Voices of the Eastern Shore**. Ray is Emeritus Professor of History at Salisbury University and Dreanna is Assistant Dean at University of North Texas Libraries — and a fifth great-granddaughter of Elizabeth Teackle!

This project is fulfilling a long-held dream of our former Trust founder, Gale Yerges. Over the past several years, Dreanna, Ray and their team have worked diligently to curate a vast collection of letters and documents related to the Teackle family and their extended network.

The documents have been carefully imaged, tran-

scribed and published on the voicesoftheeasternshore.org website — to make them publicly available for research and interpretation. *Read more about the **Voices** project on the following pages.*

2024 ANNUAL MEETING



TRUST RECEIVES AWARD

At the annual meeting, Senator Mary Beth Carozza, representing the state of Maryland, presented the Chairman of Somerset County Historical Trust, Randy George, a certificate for outstanding service in preservation of our county's local history.

Trust board member Suzanne Smith introduced Senator Carozza, who congratulated the members of the Trust for their contribution to the preservation of history in the state of Maryland and presented the official certificate.



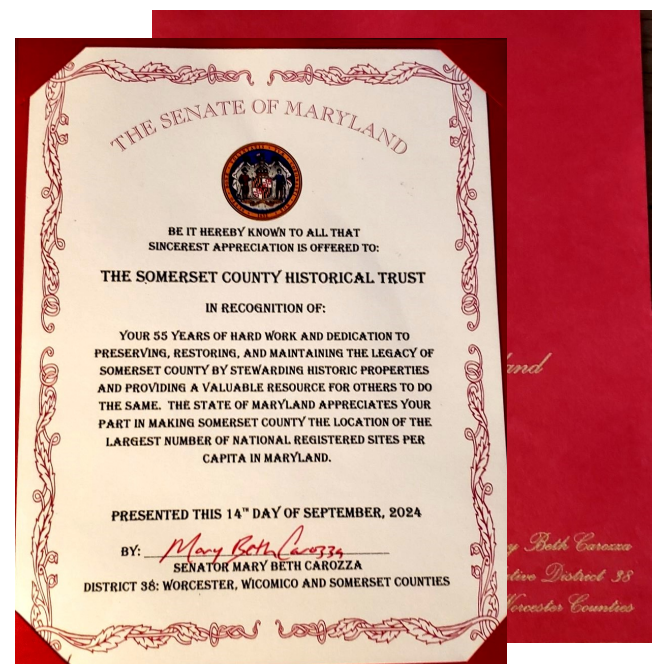
Photo by Carrie Samis



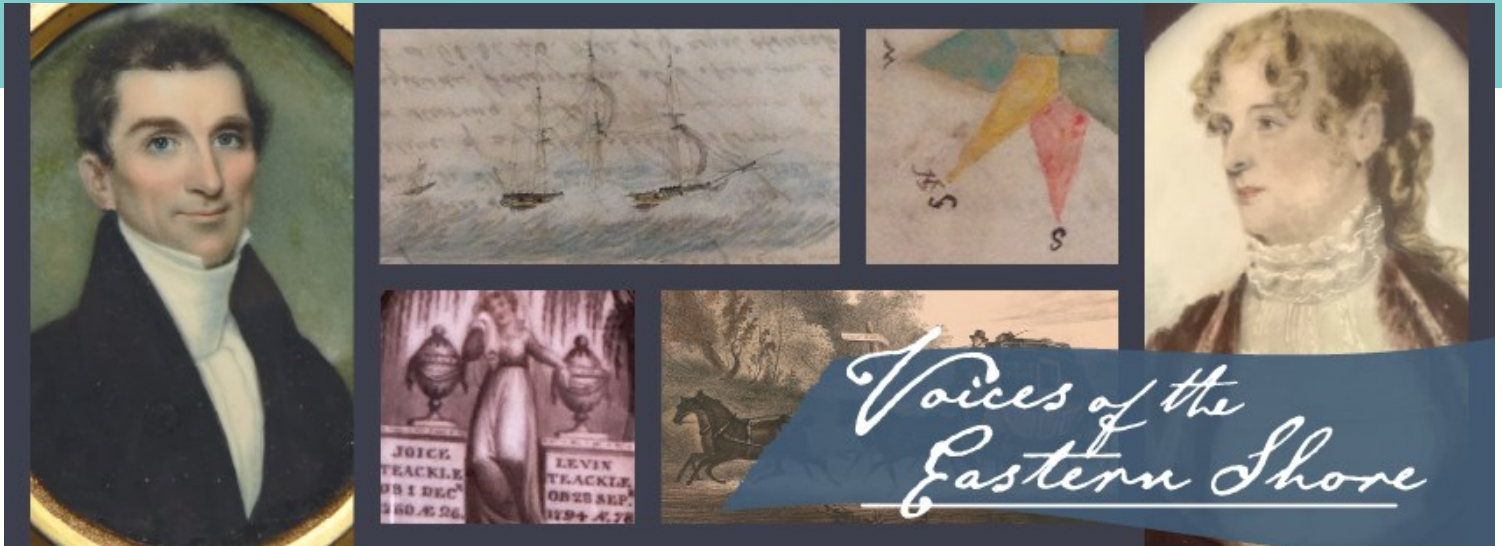
From left: Senator Mary Beth Carozza, Chairman Randy George and Board Member Suzanne Tawes Smith

In her presentation, Senator Carozza cited the efforts of the Trust in acquiring and restoring historical homes. This has resulted in Somerset County having the largest number of historic homes in the state of Maryland.

In addition, the Trust is currently involved in the *Voices of the Eastern Shore* project, transcribing the letters and documents related to the Teackle family and their extended network of relationships throughout the Eastern Shore and beyond. This project has grown exponentially since its inception and now has hundreds of documents available to the public on the project website voicesoftheeasternshore.org.



ANNOUNCEMENT



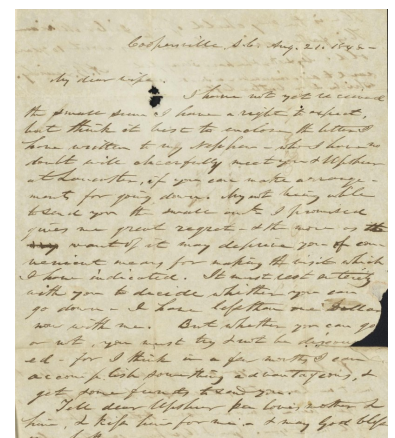
After years of hard work, the Trust in collaboration with the University of North Texas is proud to announce the launch of VOICES OF THE EASTERN SHORE !

VOICES OF THE EASTERN SHORE (originally known as the Teackle Letter Project) is proud to announce its online digital access to an extensive collection of letters, papers and journals of Littleton and Elizabeth Upshur Teackle and their extended network of family, friends, and social and political connections.

THE LETTER COLLECTION

The Teackles came to Princess Anne from the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1801 and the following year began construction of their elegant Princess Anne home that they called *Teackletonia*. During uncertain economic times they finally completed the mansion in 1819, and the family retained ownership until Mr. Teackle's death in 1848.

Mrs. Teackle's personal letters are eye-witness accounts of her life in Princess Anne, Maryland in the first three decades of the 19th century. She writes of literature and gardening as a needed relief from the burdens of managing a large household, much of the time on her own. She speaks of the care of her enslaved servants, of the dangers of childbirth in a time of medical ignorance, and of the uncertainties of life. She is also an avid reader and witness to history in a time of national and international turmoil.



The collection also features hundreds of documents from her husband, Littleton Dennis Teackle. He founded the first Bank of Somerset, the Steam Company of Princess Anne, established an extensive shipping and import business, and served as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates from 1822 to 1836. Much of his writing relates to early economic and financial opportunities, newly invented technologies, establishment of a statewide educational system, and nascent banking system, and his notable correspondents include Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, Henry Clay and others.

The Teackles' writings are opening a view into the interconnected associations of prominent families of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. The social, political, economic and cultural lives of the Eyre, Upshur, Teackle, Dennis and Quinby families are emerging and clearly show the importance of these families as participants in the daily life of the New Nation. They are unfolding, not just as names on a page, but as fully developed, multi-faceted people.

THE BEGINNING

This project is fulfilling a long-held dream of our former Trust founder, Gale Yerges. It began when she and architectural historian, Paul Touart, located a few letters written by Mrs. Teackle and hoped that someday they could be published. Over the years, Trust members had funded the transcription of some of these letters, but with Gale's passing and Paul's retirement, the dream risked failure.



In early 2021 the Trust resurrected the project with the aid of two tireless individuals, Dr. Ray Thompson and Dreanna Belden, along with Trust Chairman Randy George. Ray is Emeritus Professor of History at Salisbury University and Dreanna is Assistant Dean at University of North Texas Libraries (and a fifth great granddaughter of Elizabeth Teackle!).

VOICES OF THE EASTERN SHORE PROJECT

As the team dove deeper into the transcriptions, they discovered that Elizabeth's letters were only the tip of an iceberg. Her connections and those of her merchant husband, Littleton Dennis Teackle, were extensive. Soon hundreds of additional letters and documents began to emerge from family members, business associates, and well-known regional and national leaders, all relating to life on the Eastern Shore and beyond in the formative years of the nation.



Hence, the decision was made to expand the project and publish the entire collection of letters and documents online, and named the project *Voices of the Eastern Shore*.

PHASE 1

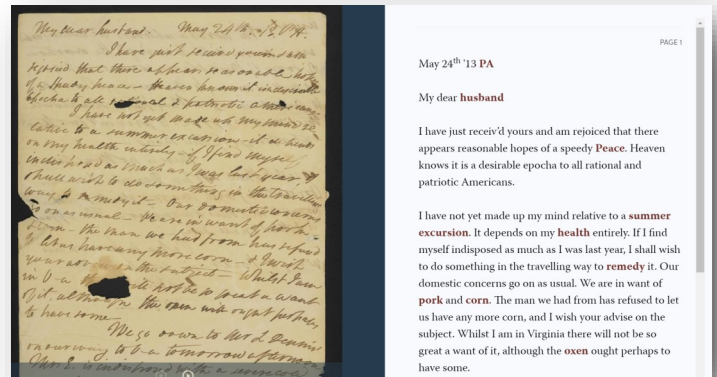
As a first phase, the team along with a number of professional researchers and students, have focused on transcribing and publishing the initial group of Teackle family letters and documents, most of which are located in the University of Virginia collection. Much work still lies ahead as additional materials continue to be unearthed — work that may go on for decades.

Voices of the Eastern Shore

WHAT'S INVOLVED

For every document, a high-resolution image is taken and posted on the 'From the Page' portal to make available for transcription. Team members and a growing group of volunteers do an initial transcription of the document, which is then reviewed and edited multiple times before the transcription is fully ready.

Then, keywords and annotations are added as well as links to references to significant people and places mentioned within the documents— all to enhance searching of content to maximize access to the information. The document is then fully ready to publish on the Voices of the Eastern Shore website — voicesoftheeasternshore.org



NEXT STEPS

We are in the process of including over 2,000 additional documents from the University of Virginia Libraries, Library of Congress, American Philosophical Society, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, William and Mary and Duke University and other sources. They include letters, travel journals, business ledgers, newspaper accounts and legal documents related to the extended Teackle family. We are fortunate to have found a partner in the University of North Texas Libraries, whose research facilities and expertise are fully dedicated to this project.


Having these materials online takes them out of dusty archives and brings them home to the Eastern Shore. The letters touch on almost every topic that historians, educators, lifelong learners, and students need to understand the era that the Teackle family and their broad connections lived in.

HELP SUPPORT THE PROJECT

In 2023, a \$50,000 grant from Maryland Historical Areas Authority was used to acquire original materials from numerous sources, have them professionally scanned at high resolution, produce thorough biographies of all persons mentioned in the documents, and create a professional website to house the archive. Much of the transcription work is being done by volunteers, but hired professional historians, website management, and reproduction of original materials still requires an ongoing need for funds.

We are now turning to the public to invest in a world-class endeavor. Please consider how you can contribute your own voice to Voices of the Eastern Shore. For more information and ways to support the project, go to voicesoftheeasternshore.org or schtrust.org.

*And so, with the materials that we are gathering,
Gale's book may now be written — not by one author,
but my many ...*



Become a Transcriber!

Sign up to become a **VOLUNTEER TRANSCRIBER** of the Teackle documents on **From the Page**, our platform for transcribing historic documents. We have letters, ledgers, and broadsides—and we'd love for you to help us bring this project to life.

Go to **From the Page** website: <https://fromthepage.com> to sign up,

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I am sure you have been impatient to hear from me - my dearest friends - but I have been so occupied that I have not been able to write - I have been to York and to Norfolk - and have seen so much - that it would take me a year - to think of, and recumb. if all, to see her work over in Mr. Lawless's house on Sunday the 14th long to encounter his accommodation - in the last evening of people we did not reach York until late the following day - we had a beautiful view of the grand scenery of Vauxhall all night as they pass - as the morning early in the day after we heard I have very far have read the whole account in the papers - on reaching York - I was glad to show to each if a spot of scenic ground could be passed in us - but before he there - our and before on the bank while we had on board and little back - hardly some very pleasant position - from the steam boat nation states which near York N - e to reach town - in the most convenient way for the winter use of the boats cabin - which has been built by the company - and the river sailing on the water - where we are now - and search for 32136069

Go to voicesoftheeasternshore.org
and search for 32136069

- ◆ Gen. Robert Barraud Taylor, a central figure in the planning and hosting these events, was the brother of the Eyre's sister-in-law, Grace Taylor Eyre, who married John's brother William Eyre of Eyreville. John and Ann Eyre were raising the children of Grace and William Eyre as they both died when their children were young.

It's a remarkable letter showing a woman's perspective of these historic events. None of the books or newspaper articles of that time mentioned any of the women involved in hosting or attending these events, so it's invaluable in that regard as well.

Find the letter on voicesoftheeasternshore.org and search for 32136069.

Somerset County Historical Trust

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Proceeds help support the Trust !

schtrust.org/the-store-room

- ♦ Antique bricks
 - ♦ Fencing
 - ♦ Hardware
- ♦ Lumber & Building Materials
 - ♦ Shutters
- ♦ Windows & Doors

