



Somerset County Historical Trust **Tribune**

Preserving the Legacy of Somerset County

Note from our Chairman

Welcome to our third Trust newsletter! We hope that you find it useful, but also hope you will help us with ideas, opinions and content going forward.

Don't forget to check our Trust website — schtrust.org — a resource for information on properties, materials, local contractors, and other happenings relevant to current or prospective historic homeowners in our area.

- ◆ Our latest project is the digitalization of extensive historical information on over 500 important historical sites in Somerset County. We are partnering on this project with the Nabb Center, which has generously provided their expert guidance and volunteer staff to scan our existing paper files into digital format using their state-of-the-art equipment.

Once completed, the Trust can then make this research collection available online on our website for anyone researching specific properties and their genealogies.

- ◆ This spring and summer have seen pending or final sales of an unusual number of Somerset's historical properties. These include *Makepeace* in Crisfield, *Linden Hill*, *Beauchamp House*, *John W. Crisfield House*, *Nutter's Purchase* and *Catalpa Farm* in Princess Anne, *Noah Webster House* on Deal Island, *Kingston Hall* and *Beauchamp House* in Kingston, *Pomfret* in Marion, and *Bound's Lot* in Allen. Those of us familiar with these homes now have the opportunity to meet many 'new neighbors' and to welcome them into our organization and community.

The Trust plans on preparing Welcome Packets to present to the new owners, with historical information on their new properties and other useful information including membership to the Trust. We hope that Trust members also take the opportunity to reach out to these new owners and extend a hand of welcome.



It is not too early to make plans to gather in person for our **2021 Annual Meeting** scheduled for Friday, September 24, 2021. It will be held at Williams Conquest in Marion (home of Randy and Smaro George) starting at 4 pm, rain or shine. Invitations will go out later this summer, and we look forward to finally meeting again together in person.

Contents

Note from our Chairman	1
Farewell to An Old Friend: Panther's Den	2-3
Architectural History of Somerset	4-5
Save the Date	back

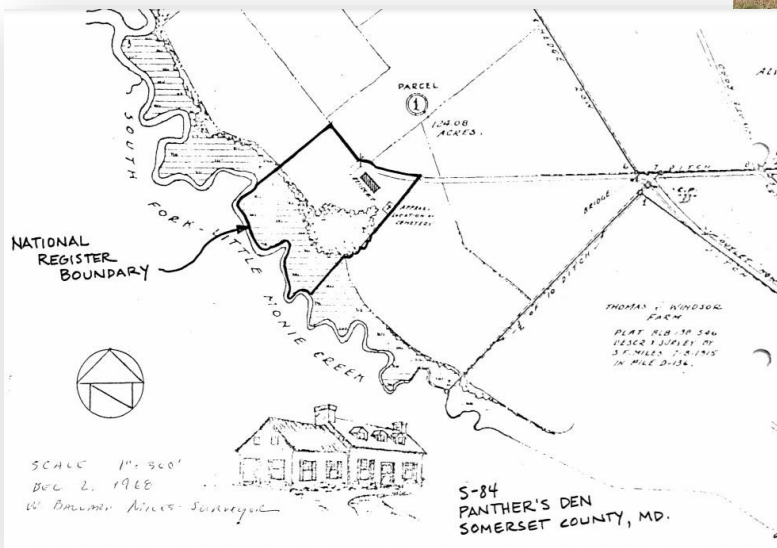
FAREWELL TO AN OLD FRIEND

SADLY ON MARCH 13, 2021, SOMERSET COUNTY LOST ANOTHER ONE OF ITS EARLIEST HOMES TO FIRE

Panther's Den (also called Lindenwood and the Kohlheim House) was a circa 1725-1750 Flemish bond brick story-and-a-half house located between the forks of Little Monie Creek near Venton, west of Princess Anne.

This was one in a collection of approximately eight early 18th century story-and-a-half glazed brick pattern houses in Somerset County.

John Pantor (also spelled Panter and Panther) was of local significance as an early settler (c. 1663-1666) as well as a prominent land owner and highway surveyor. In 1666 he patented 200 acres under the name



'Panthers Denn' and upon his death in 1714, it was willed to his wife and then passed to his cousin Catherine and Pantor Laws (also Lawes).

The first stage of the house is believed to have been built about 1725. The gable-end chimneys were built of particularly large bricks in Flemish bond with random



glazed headers, and the remainder of the house was framed.

According to Paul Touart's extensive research for the National Register, the Lawes family owned the property until 1802. At approximately the time of the American Revolution, they enlarged the home and encased all four walls in Flemish bond brick.

Panther's Den ...

In the 19th century a series of farm owners — the Robertsons, Leatherburys, Reeds, and Wallers — raised families here and tended the land. The Wallers called the house 'Lindenwood'. Family members were buried near the house and their markers bear witness to the generations who called this place home.



Between 1830 and 1850 the house's interior was remodeled by members of the Waller family, with raised paneling, mantels, chair rails, and late Federal style moldings and stairs. In the early 20th century the front and back were heavily stuccoed.

After 1903 the house and land had many owners — Lloyd, West, Murrell, Duer, Jackson, Toadvine, Dashiell, and



Kohlheim. Dr. James Gallaher bought the house and 124 acres in 1975 with the intention of restoring it, but his premature death left the house unfinished and empty until the day that it burned to the ground.

As soon as the ashes had cooled, the present owners gave permission to the Somerset County Historical Trust to salvage the only material remaining — the colonial-era bricks. Wall collapse had broken the softer interior or 'salmon' bricks, but several trust members and other volunteers were able to laboriously retrieve about 10,000 whole and half bricks. Historic masons in Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia have expressed interest in buying them for their restoration projects but only after they have been cleaned.



And so now begins the fun part! The Trust is now sending out a clarification call to our 120+ members for volunteers interested in actual hands-on historic preservation. The task is beyond the capability of a single person.

With 5 minutes of instruction, individuals or groups will be trained in handling centuries-old building materials, in the ancient art of brick production, in historic mortar formulation, and in cleaning and preserving these bygone relics to be passed to future generations.

If any of this piques your interest, please contact Randy George 410-713-5993 to schedule a time when you can participate.

Thank you !!



Architectural History of Somerset

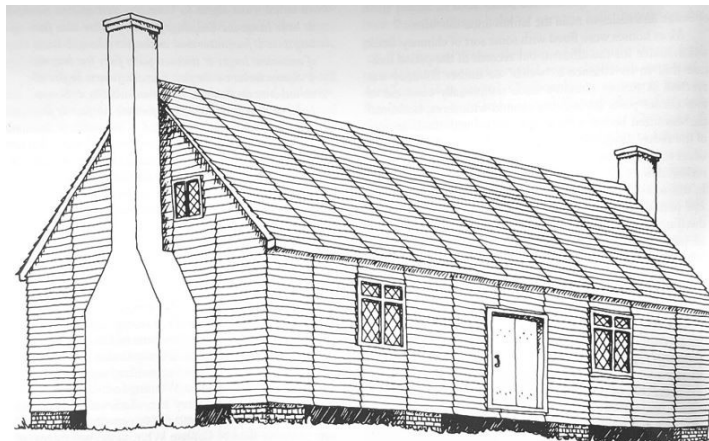
The late -17th century

Gradually the early settlement dwellings in Somerset were replaced with similarly styled structures with timber frames, but with sills raised off the ground. They were clad with clapboards but may have had one or two gable ends made entirely of brick.

Single room houses had only a main Hall for public and private activities, and the Hall Chamber above provided additional sleeping and storage space.



Image of Pear Valley, Eastville, VA dating 1720-1750, one brick end laid in Flemish bond. Currently owned by Northampton Historic Preservation Society



Conjectural drawing of the Captain William Whittington house, 40 x 20, c. 1688
Paul Touart and Nancy Kurtz

The two-room layout consisted of the Hall and the somewhat smaller Parlor for more private activities and sleeping quarters for the owners. The front door usually opened into the Hall. Except in larger homes, the second floor was reached by a winder stair beside the Hall chimney. Beneath the stair and beside the fireplace, cupboards were built for storage.

Chimneys were usually on one or two of the gable ends and extended high above the roof line. Where

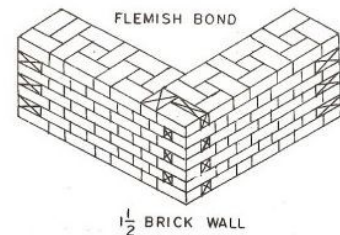
the Hall or Parlor were divided into additional rooms, corner fireplaces were created with separate flues. Larger homes had internal chimneys with corner fireplaces in more than one adjacent room.

Brick was labor-intensive, expensive, and could be afforded only by wealthier families, but in the absence of available stone in the region, was still the most desirable material for chimneys and foundations. Masonry was typically crafted locally on site (though there are some references to imported bricks used as ballast on ships). Mortar was made with sand and lime created from burned oyster shells, both of which were in ready supply.

Bricks were made of clay and sand, hand pressed into molds, allowed to dry, and then baked at high temperature in wood-fired ovens. The sand exposed to the greatest heat melted into a glass with green or blue-black hue,

and these 'glazed' bricks were used to create geometric patterns in the exposed Flemish bond.

Lower walls were one-and-a-half to two bricks thick for stability, but upper walls required less thickness.



Brick glazed header pattern and dog-tooth bricks, Makepeace

The late -17th century (cont'd)

There are some examples of larger two-room houses with a projecting 'Porch Tower', a two-story projection off the front, giving the house a T-shape. The porch tower, when enclosed, provided additional living space.



Conjectural drawing of the Francis Jenkins house, c. 1690
Paul Touart and Nancy Kurtz

The interiors of modest homes were covered with clapboard, and as economics allowed, with lath and plaster, often whitewashed. When an owner's wealth permitted, 17th and 18th century rooms were adorned with raised paneling, especially on chimney walls. Fireplaces were often 6 to 8 feet wide, 3 to 4 feet deep, and large enough for cooking cranes and kettles. They were notoriously smoky, at least until the inventions of Count Rumford and Ben Franklin made it possible to control the draft. Finer homes were provided with detailed crown molding of wood or plaster, with chair rails and wainscoting, ornate stair bannisters, and brightly colored paint.

No 17th century structures have survived in Somerset County but are described in the public record.

- ◆ The earliest reference to a brick structure was the Dividing Creek Courthouse, 50 by 20 feet, built in 1694 with one gable brick end. No remnant survives.
- ◆ The Powell-Bentson House, built around 1700, is the closest example of a one-room settlement type house with a patterned brick gable end that survived until modern times. It stood until the 1960s when it was dismantled and moved by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA).
- ◆ The Andrew Jones House along the Wicomico River is inferred from a 1684 inventory - a 5-room house with hall, parlor, two chambers above, and a porch tower. Other hall/parlor houses with porch towers were the 1686 John Evans House, and the 1697 Colonel David Brown House.



Restored interior of Powell-Bentson House, c 1700-1720. Stood near Rehoboth MD till 1960s. Later period casement windows and mantle shelf. Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA)

The most outstanding 17th century dwelling was that of Colonel Francis Jenkins whose 1710 inventory described his Pocomoke River house. His 8-room residence had 4 main rooms served by a central fireplace, a 2nd floor dining room, and additional rooms on the 3rd floor.

Next issue: The early-mid 18th century

Somerset County Historical Trust, Inc.

PO Box 863
Princess Anne, MD 21853



<http://schtrust.org>
info@schtrust.org

Somerset County Historical Trust, Inc.

The Somerset County Historical Trust is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Somerset's past through research, education, preservation & restoration.

Through advocacy and active participation in Maryland Historical Trust programs and grants, we continuously seek to promote the stories and rich history of Somerset County.



**Somerset County Historical Trust
2021 ANNUAL MEETING
Friday, September 24, 2021**

**4 to 6 p.m. at Williams Conquest
(home of Randy and Smaro George)**