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Shore First

October 2025
Vol. 9, No. 6

**FREE
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Timothy Hill House
Island's Oldest Home
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Help Hill House Continue!
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Kathleen Peirson serving great meals at Yuk-Yuk and Joe's in Eastville | Page 8



Pumpkin cream cheese muffins are a hit for fall | Page 10

Legends of the fall: Shore's spooky stories

Timothy Hill House (pictured) on Chincoteague Island is site of one of the area's mysteries | Page 6

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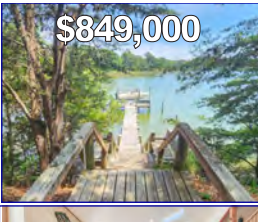
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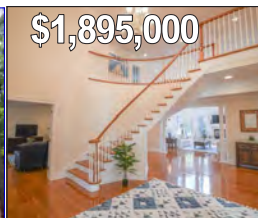
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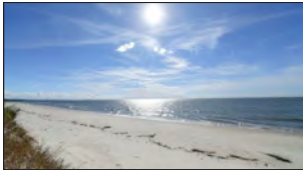


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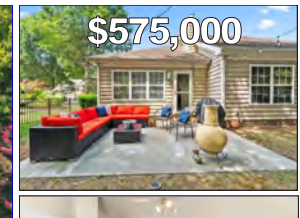


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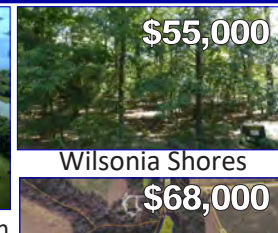
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October 4 | Machipongo Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair

AG FAIR: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Eastern Shore of Virginia Agricultural Fair returns to the Northampton Parks and Recreation Community Center, 7247 Young St., Machipongo. There will be contests, an antique tractor parade, and much more.

October 4 | Melfa Vaux Hall Fall Festival

FALL FESTIVAL: Vaux Hall Farm, 27698 Bobtown Road, Melfa, will host a fall festival complete with a corn maze, a pumpkin patch, hayrides, and vendors.

October 5 | Wachapreague Open house

OPEN HOUSE: Noon to 4 p.m., the Wachapreague Volunteer Fire Company is hosting an open house to kick off Fire Prevention Week. It will include kids games, touch-a-truck, and giveaways, and local public service and health care agencies will be in attendance.

Saturday, Oct. 4

■ **FAMILY FUN DAY:** 1 p.m., The Neversink Farm at 33302 Waterfield Lane, Atlantic, will hold a Family Fun Day with hayrides, pony rides, educational programs, food, kids games, activities, and farm tours. There also will be a horsemanship show.

■ **MUSIC FESTIVAL:** 3 to 7 p.m., the third annual Clamtown Jam will be held at the Willis Wharf boat ramp and feature, live music, food for sale, and raffles.

Friday, Oct. 10

■ **LIVE MUSIC:** 7 to 9 p.m. The Stingrays perform live at the Lemon Tree Gallery, 301 Mason Ave., Cape Charles.

Saturday, Oct. 11

■ **HISTORY FESTIVAL:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Shore History is hosting the Eastern Shore History Festival at Ker Place, 69 Market St.

■ **OYSTER FESTIVAL:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual Oyster Festival at Tom's Cove Park, Chincoteague. There will be all-you-can-eat seafood, music by Island Boy, a raffle, and more. Tickets are \$65 and children under 5 are free. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/jt2xtzyv>

■ **CASH BASH:** Noon to 4 p.m., Onancock Elks Lodge, 22454 Front St., Accomac. Cash prizes will be given away every 15 minutes at the Elks' Cash Bash. There will also be live music by the Southern Fog Band, food, drinks, and raffles. Bring a lawn chair. Tickets can be purchased at the Elks Lodge.

■ **CONCERT:** 7 p.m., Cokesbury Cultural Center, 13 Market St., Onancock. Alvy Powell and Caroline Gibson will perform. This is a free event but donations are welcome.

■ **PSYCHIC:** 7:30 p.m., Historic Palace Theatre, 305 Mason Ave., Cape Charles. Mind Mysteries with Dan Gaffney is an interactive show of mind reading magic. For tickets or more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/5xtva5hz>

Friday, Oct. 17

■ HALLOWEEN EVENT: 7 to 10 p.m., the Bloxom Volunteer Fire Company is having Nighttime Acres at the Bloxom Town Square. Tickets are \$15 for general admission. Those who want to get their hearts racing can buy a full-contact experience for \$25. For more information visit <https://tinyurl.com/4ktpds5s>

Saturday, Oct. 18

■ MASQUERADE BALL: 6 to 11 p.m., Chincoteague Center, 6155 Community Drive, Chincoteague. Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence is hosting the Night of Enchantment Masquerade Ball. There will be cocktails and finger food, followed by dinner, live music by the Southern Fog Band, an open bar, and an online art auction. The attire is formal and masks are encouraged. For tickets visit <https://tinyurl.com/2x8c87b6>

Thursday, Oct. 23

■ CHILDREN'S PROGRAM: 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., Delmarva Discovery Museum, Pocomoke City. During Birds with Toddlers kids can learn how to identify birds through activities. Learn why seagulls are an important part of the ecosystem, and contribute to a community art program. The cost is \$10 for kids and \$5 for adults. Museum members are free.

■ DANCE LESSONS: 6 to 7 p.m., The Oyster Farm, Cape Charles. Ballroom and More on the Shore is hosting a dance lesson. No experience or partner necessary. The cost is \$5 per person.

Friday, Oct. 31

■ TRUNK OR TREAT: 5 to 7 p.m., Boys and Girls Club of the ESVA, 24577 Mary N. Smith Road, Accomac. The club is hosting a trunk or treat. Kids are encouraged to wear their costumes and visit decorated trunks. There will also be music, face painting, and food for sale.

■ TRUNK OR TREAT: 5 to 7 p.m., Par 4 Bar and Grill, 9480 Lankford Highway, Temperanceville. Kids of all ages are invited to participate in a trunk or treat. The event will include a costume contest and prizes.

October 4, 6, 7, 8 | Machipongo, New Church Virginia 250 Mobile Museum

MOBILE MUSEUM: The VA250 Mobile Museum will be at the Eastern Shore Agricultural Fair in Machipongo on Oct. 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be at Virginia Welcome Center at New Church from Monday, Oct. 6, to Wednesday, Oct. 8, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day.



Friday, October 17 | Cape Charles Benefit miniature golf tournament

MINI GOLF TOURNEY: Check-in at 5 p.m., shotgun start at 6 p.m. The Cape Charles Historic District Civic League is hosting a miniature golf tournament at Cape Charles Mini Golf. This will be a four-person scramble format tournament. The cost per foursome is \$80. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. To register visit the civic league's Facebook page.



Saturday, October 25 | Nassawadox Art and Food Festival

FOOD AND ART FESTIVAL: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Franktown United Methodist Church, Franktown. The annual Franktown Art and Food Festival returns.





SHORE FIRST/JIMMY SHOCKLEY

The historic Timothy Hill House, the oldest home on Chincoteague, is the site of a macabre island legend.

Ghost stories are Eastern Shore's legends of the fall

Tours, stories, and hauntings punctuate an October autumn

Mostly True Ghost Stories

On Friday, Oct. 24, from 6 to 7 p.m., the Mostly True Ghost Stories of Onancock Tour will be hosted as part of Onancock's Halloween celebration. The cost is \$15. To book a tour visit <https://tinyurl.com/yrbnxavc>

BY SARAH BARBAN
Shore First

As Halloween draws nearer, ghosts and ghouls seem to be around every corner.

Halloween costumes line store shelves and spooky movies flood theaters and televisions.

The supernatural feels closer somehow, and in some spots on the Eastern Shore that may be the case.

The Eastern Shore has had its fair share of mystery and mayhem over the years, and several ghost tours across the region highlight the darker side of history, including a dash of the unexplainable.

Chincoteague Step Through Time Tours offers a variety of historic walking tours around the island, but by far the Pirate Legend and Lore Tour, which includes several ghost stories, is the most popular, said Cindy Faith,

who runs Chincoteague Step Through Time Tours.

"October will be very busy," she said. "People are in the Halloween spirit and people are excited to do fun stuff at night. It's a good outing for the whole family."

One of the haunted spots that Faith highlights on the tour is the Timothy Hill House.

It is the oldest home on Chincoteague and it is also the site of an island legend that's been handed down through the generations.

Ginny, a 13-year-old who lived in the house, was being courted by an employee of her family, according to Faith.

When Ginny's parents decided he wasn't a suitable match, the boy took his vengeance by shooting Ginny and her mother.

The mother survived, but Ginny died and the boy committed suicide.

People have reported feeling a presence in the house, Faith said.

"I've been a docent there since the house opened to the public," she said. "Every once in a while, someone comes in who has not been told the details of the story and they come in and feel something in the house."

Other haunted spots on the tour include the Island Theatre and the former Muller's Ice Cream Parlor.

Pirate Legend and Lore Tours begin at 7 p.m. Tours can be booked by calling Faith at 757-894-1953.

Tours are available nightly depending on demand and availability. The cost is \$20, and kids 10 and under are free.

The Captain Timothy Hill House is open for tours on Fridays from 1 to 3 p.m. through October. After October, private tours can be booked by calling 914-589-7733.

Cape Charles

Cape Charles has its fair share of ghostly tales as well.

Berkley Rayfield, who ran a ghost tour in Cape Charles in the early 2000s, can still recount tales that his

(Continued on page 7)

Haunted

(Continued from page 6)

substitute teacher, Sandy Knuckles, told him about her haunted house.

Her children would awake after their pillows or bedcovers had been ripped off by an unseen force, objects moved around, and strange noises could be heard in the house.

“She said that when she had first moved into the house that she had gone up in the attic and there was a peacoat that was up in attic hanging,” Rayfield said.

“She said on several occasions she would see this man down in her kitchen and he was sitting there and he was always wearing that blue navy peacoat.”

Rayfield worked with a clairvoyant and previous homeowners to piece together stories for the tour, which shared Cape Charles’ history through the lens of the supernatural.

Legend has it that one morning Knuckles heard her husband come downstairs and sit at the kitchen table.

She began to give him the list of the chores for the day, but when she turned around to look, it was a man in a dark peacoat sitting at the table — it wasn’t her husband.

She screamed and the figure vanished. Her husband also reported seeing the figure of a man in a peacoat move up and down the stairs.

The corner of Strawberry Street and Madison Avenue in Cape Charles is another reported site of hauntings.

Cape Charles became a dry town for a period starting in 1888, but bootleggers made extra money by selling moonshine.



SHORE FIRST/JIMMY SHOCKLEY

The former Muller’s Ice Cream Parlor on Chincoteague Island is one of the stops on the Chincoteague Ghost Tour.

Some have claimed to hear the ghostly parties of bootleggers at this corner and some even claim to smell moonshine.

The 200 block of Tazewell is also reportedly a hotbed of paranormal activity.

A former resident named Mr. Horsley reported seeing blue orbs appear and disappear in his yard and in his home, as well as shadowy figures.

On Friday, Oct. 24, from 6 to 7 p.m. the Mostly True Ghost Stories of Onancock Tour will be hosted as part

of Onancock’s Halloween celebration. The tour will cover ghostly legends, accounts of haunted houses, and unexplained happenings around town, some of them provided by residents.

The cost is \$15. To book a tour visit <https://tinyurl.com/yrbnxavc>



**Arron
Brown**



**Dashaun
Polk**

ESCC students enjoy off-campus projects

Arron Brown takes on the world of simulated racing and dominates the virtual track.

The Eastern Shore Community College student is feeding off a lifelong fascination with NASCAR racing, in which he and his dad follow Kyle Busch.

He caught his first race at Dover

when he was 4 years old and with technology has been able to hit the track in his own way, producing some impressive results.

On Monday, Sept. 22, Brown won first place in the Collegiate iRacing League Cup Series after coming in second place just a few weeks earlier.

These races are incredibly realistic and require many of the same skills and mental sharpness that are required in the real-world version. Sim-racing, af-

ter all, kept professional drivers occupied during COVID-19 pandemic when races were suspended.

Participating in two separate leagues, Brown puts in the work on time trials and attempts to position himself for tournaments that are held in the fall and spring.

The eNASCAR College Series offers \$50,000 in scholarships throughout the season. Racing against other college

(Continued on page 9)



SHORE FIRST/JANET BERNOSKY

Meat loaf and mashed potatoes are part of the Wednesday special at Yuk-Yuk and Joe's in Eastville.

Yuk-Yuk and Joe's in Eastville reopens — to much relief

Restaurant has reopened

Thanks to a fundraiser that brought in \$55,000, Yuk-Yuk and Joe's Restaurant and Bar in Eastville got a new sewer system and recently reopened. "I am truly thankful and humbled by the support," said Kathleen Peirson.

BY JANET BERNOSKY
Shore First

Kathleen Peirson, "Yuk" of the iconic Yuk-Yuk & Joe's Restaurant and Bar on Courthouse Road in Eastville, had been nursing along the restaurant's septic system for several years, hoping to keep it alive as long as possible.

Finally, last April, a county health inspector told her bluntly, "You can't

After needed upgrades, popular eatery is back for eclectic customers

keep putting band-aids on a broken arm."

The cost for a new system was prohibitive, and without other options in sight, the restaurant unexpectedly shut down just as she had her knee replaced.

Instead of recuperating at home, she found herself at the restaurant she's owned for 25 years, bidding what she thought was a permanent farewell to her loyal customers and

faithful employees.

Luckily, fate intervened and the popular restaurant reopened on July 19 after a GoFundMe effort raised \$55,000 toward a new system that Boggs Water and Sewage Inc. subsequently installed.

"We are back and we are open for business," Peirson said. "I am truly thankful and humbled by the support we received from our customers, employees, and the community."

Yuk-Yuk's menu offers a wide range of choices, whether it's burgers, pizza, potato skins, salads, sandwiches, soups, or its daily hot lunch and dinner specials with sides.

There is something tasty for everyone's palate, including children.

The dinner menu offers more seafood choices and specials, she said, including baskets and platters featuring fish and chips, crab cakes, and fried clams.

There's also a menu nod to Peirson's South Philadelphia roots: Philly steak sandwiches — with or without cheese — and authentic "hoagies," known elsewhere as submarine sandwiches.

Even her family from South Philly raves about her cheesesteaks when they visit.

"It's what they order here, even though they can get them at home," she said.

Hot lunch specials rotate daily, with a choice of two sides. Monday features pork chops, Tuesday is spaghetti with meat sauce, and Thursday is fried chicken, with clam fritters on the menu for Friday.

Wednesday is reserved for their absolutely delicious and moist meatloaf — a most quintessential comfort food, served with a thick, homemade gravy.

Their buttery, rough-mashed potatoes are a perfect side choice for the meatloaf: so creamy but with chunks of soft potato hidden throughout for the tastiest bite.

Not wanting a full meal? Order a hearty cup or bowl of homemade soup instead, or a soup and sandwich special, including their clear Eastern

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 7)

students is one of Brown's favorite aspects, and he gets to represent ESCC and his Phi Theta Kappa chapter with the virtual custom paints for each race.

Brown has already earned his general studies associate degree at ESCC and is currently working on his computer tech degree with networking and cybersecurity. His goal is to open his own computer repair location on the Shore and fill a void with this type of local support.

Dashaun Polk is a 2020 graduate of Arcadia High School who achieved his HVAC career studies certificate and his associate degree in electronics technology.

Already employed by an independent contractor and off to a great start with his career, Polk is enjoying expressing his creative side by acting on a lifelong interest in fantasy storytelling in the tradition of Marvel, Dragonball Z, and other influences.

His latest story is available in book form through Amazon and is entitled "The Chaotic Chronicles of Slay1r." It tells the tale of Shaun Slay1r, a character who has faced adversity throughout his life, from school, society and now a corrupted organization called "Siyndicate."

With an entertaining mix of fantasy and storylines that include dedicated friends and family and the classic good versus evil, you can easily visualize Polk's work on a big screen. That wouldn't bother Polk a bit. Also a wrestling fan, Polk took inspiration for his main villain in the book from the late wrestler Windham Rotunda. His ring persona "The Fiend" served as an influence on building the perfect bad guy for his storyline.

Like most writers, reaching a broader audience is the goal, and a live-action version of his stories would be a dream come true. Polk pulls from real life and personal experiences. He says he enjoys having an outlet where his creative thoughts can be captured and spun into something tangible for others to enjoy.

From the special skill sets of virtual racing to the creativity involved in capturing fantasy storylines, ESCC students are continuing to amaze others with their diverse interests and talents.



SHORE FIRST/JANET BERNOSKY

Kathleen Peirson, of Yuk-Yuk and Joe's in Eastville, recently reopened the restaurant.

Yuk-Yuk and Joe's

(Continued from page 8)

Shore clam chowder.

"Our soups remain a favorite all year round, even in the summer," she said. "It's always a surprise which one is on the menu. I leave it up to my cooks."

Thursday evenings are reserved for their very popular "wing night," typically drawing a big crowd.

But these aren't just any old wings — no flats and drums found here. According to Peirson, they feature whole, jumbo-sized wings, so large they are jokingly referred to as "buzzard wings."

Plus, they make their own hot sauce.

"And be sure to leave room for dessert," said Peirson.

Sweet treats include cheesecake with several different toppings, along with their cakes, including "death by chocolate," coconut, or the scrumptious and moist mandarin orange cake with a creamy pineapple icing, all homemade by their pastry chef.

Yuk-Yuk's draws in an eclectic crowd — from watermen, to locals, vacationers, and professionals on court

day ... or those who might be on the docket.

"I'll ask them how fast they were going," Peirson said. "When they say 80 mph, I just roll my eyes."

No matter the time of day, Peirson wants everyone to feel welcome — to eat, relax, and have good conversations.

Joe and Deborah Moore, of Cape Charles, have been regular customers since moving to the area full-time two years ago and recently stopped in for lunch.

Both enjoy the atmosphere as much as the food, noting you can't help but overhear the interesting conversations happening within earshot.

"It's as comfortable as if you were sitting at your own kitchen table," said Deborah Moore.

That is, until one occasion when a pool ball leaped off the table and rolled under their booth.

Before they could bat an eye, someone dove under their table, retrieved the ball from between their feet, and resumed their game.

The Moores were unfazed, saying it's all part of good times at Yuk-Yuk's.

"Great food, at a reasonable price, too," said Joe Moore. "We just love it here."

Pumpkin cream cheese muffins are perfect for fall

I had my first pumpkin cream cheese muffin at a very well-known chain coffee shop some years ago.

They always looked gorgeous, but in the grand tradition of most store-bought baked goods, they were not anything to “write home about.”



Laura Davis

I decided to give it a go making them at home, and while a bit more time consuming than your standard muffin batter with the cream cheese filling, the results are worth an extra few minutes.

I personally feel like they fall under the realm of cupcakes more

than muffins.

The pumpkin cake is so light and moist — not dense in the way a muffin typically is.

I’m not going to complain, though — I can eat a muffin in the morning for breakfast and not feel the least bit guilty.

Then again, I’ll eat a cupcake for breakfast and not feel the least bit guilty either. At least I’m honest.

Whenever you choose to enjoy them, I’m sure that you (and whomever else you share them with) will love them, and love you for making them.

It’s time to crack open those cans of pumpkin. Happy fall, y’all!



PHOTO COURTESY LAURA DAVIS

Pumpkin cream cheese muffins produce a cake so light and moist that it seems more like a cupcake.

Laura Davis, of Chincoteague Island, is a food writer and blogger at www.tideandthyme.com. Her recipes have been featured on Huffington Post and www.craftbeer.com, among other publications. She is a frequent guest on WBOC-TV's DelmarvaLife show, where she showcases her culinary talents for viewers. Her work appears monthly in Shore First.

Pumpkin cream cheese muffins

Yields 24 Muffins

For the filling:

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar

For the muffins:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp. ground cloves

- 1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups pumpkin puree
- 1¼ cups vegetable oil

For the topping:

- ½ cup sugar
- 5 tbsp. flour
- 1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 4 tbsp. cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces

To prepare the filling, combine the cream cheese and confectioners' sugar in a medium bowl and mix well until blended and smooth.

Transfer the mixture to a piece of plastic wrap and shape into a log about 1½-inches in diameter. Smooth the plastic wrap tightly around the log, and reinforce with a piece of foil. Transfer to the freezer and chill until at least slightly firm, at least 2 hours.

To make the muffins, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line muffin pans with paper liners. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, pumpkin pie spice, salt and baking soda; whisk to blend.

In the bowl of an electric mixer combine the eggs, sugar, pumpkin puree and oil. Mix on medium-low speed until blended. With the mixer on low speed, add in the dry ingredients, mixing just until incorporated.

To make the topping, combine the sugar, flour and cinnamon in a small bowl; whisk to blend. Add in the butter pieces and cut into the dry ingredients with a pastry blender or two forks until the mixture is coarse and crumbly.

Transfer to the refrigerator until ready to use.

To assemble the muffins, fill each muffin well with a small amount of batter, just enough to cover the bottom of the liner (1-2 tablespoons). Slice the log of cream cheese filling into 24 equal pieces. Place a slice of the cream cheese mixture into each muffin well. Divide the remaining batter among the muffin cups, placing on top of the cream cheese to cover completely. Sprinkle a small amount of the topping mixture over each of the muffin wells.

Bake for 20-25 minutes.

Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely before serving.

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'Who is this lady in black?'

The ghost of Marino

Parks family tells the tale of a supernatural visitor who showed up — and vanished — daily

Marino stood, until a few years ago, just south of Lee Mont. It was visible back in the field to the left as you headed south out of town toward Drummond's Mill, a small story-and-a-half farmhouse built about 1796, known to some as Peach Brandy Farm. It had brick ends, dormer windows, and a small front stoop. Marino also had a ghost.

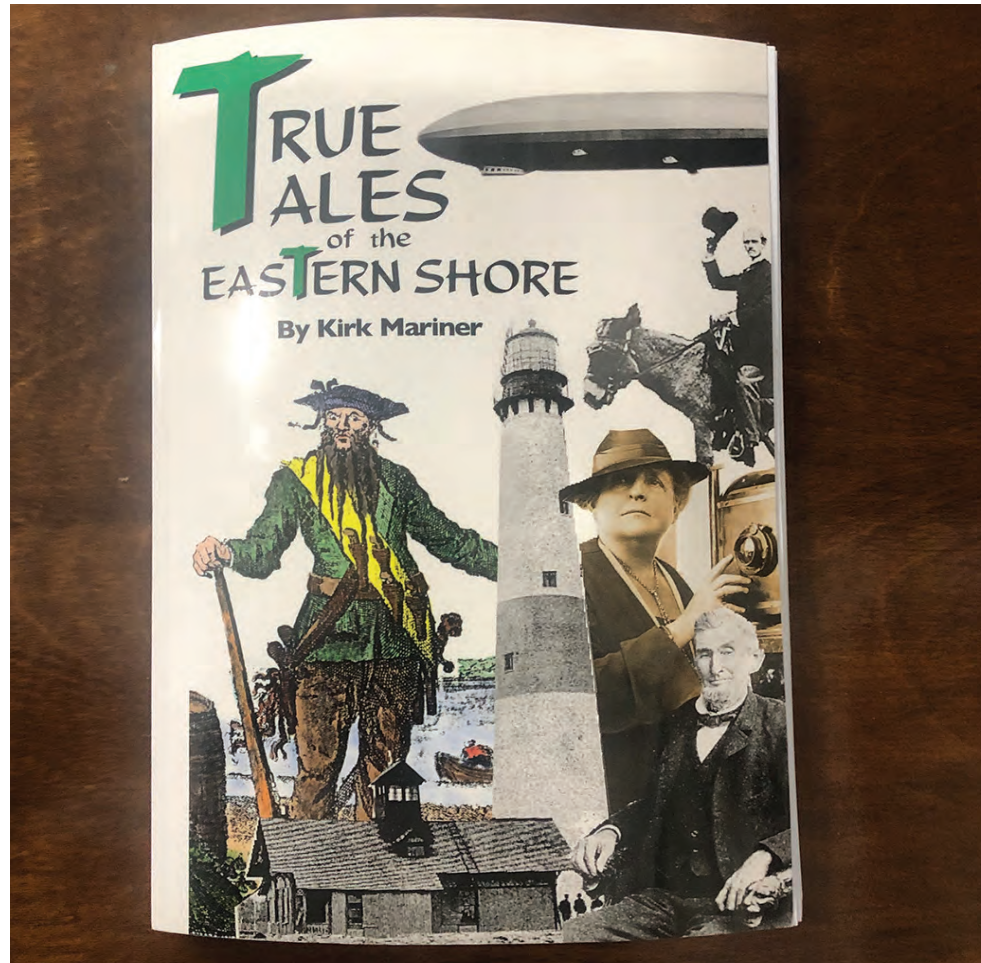


Kirk Mariner

In or about 1880, Marino was the home of George Parker Parks (1845-1911), who

rented and farmed the property to support his family. In addition to his wife Elizabeth Grinnalds Parks (1845-1915), the family at that time consisted of five children: Henry, Marcelline, Otho, Elizabeth, and Ella Grace. The two youngest children, Oscar and Everette, had not yet joined the family.

During those days George Parks worked hard around the farm and his children played hard around the old farmhouse until dinner time would find the entire family seated around the table together. There, occasionally, the children's conversation would turn to the "lady in black." And though at first the parents paid her no mind, eventu-



SHORE FIRST/TED SHOCKLEY

This excerpt is from Kirk Mariner's "True Tales of the Eastern Shore."

ally they began to notice how often this lady in black recurred in the chatter of the children. Finally one evening the parents inquired about her: "Who is this lady in black?"

"The woman who comes to visit us," came the answer.

"Oh?"

"Yes, she comes up the lane from

the main road every day."

"Really? When?"

"In the afternoon. About four o'clock."

"Then why haven't we seen her?"

"Because when she gets to the top of the steps of the front porch, she disappears."

No amount of parental reasoning

could shake the children from their story: There really was a lady in black, who really did come up the lane every day. And no amount of arguing or scoffing could persuade them that they must be imagining things: She really did disappear when she got to the top of the steps. This, insisted every child, really was true — they had all seen her.

The lady in black remained a fixture of conversation around the dinner table for many meals, the children apparently not at all perturbed by her strange behavior, the parents utterly convinced that it was childish nonsense. But finally George Parks grew tired of hearing about it, so one day he took off from work early and lay in wait, hiding, determined to prove when she did not appear that the alleged visitor did not exist.

But about four o'clock he saw her, just as the children had said: a lady in black coming up the lane from the main road, quiet and slow. He watched as she reached the edge of the yard, and watched her head straight for the front porch, and then, as he watched, she reached the top of the stairs, and vanished — just as she was about to enter the house.

It was enough to convince George Parks. That night he packed up his wife and children and moved them out of Marino into a house in Lee Mont.

(Continued on page 13)

The Rev. Kirk Mariner was an Eastern Shore author, historian, and United Methodist minister whose book, "Off 13: The Eastern Shore of Virginia Guidebook," is an indispensable volume for natives and visitors alike. Mariner died in 2017. His work appears in Eastern Shore First courtesy of Miona Publications. This first appeared in his book, "Once Upon an Island: The History of Chincoteague."

Mariner

(Continued from page 12)

Who, supposedly, was the lady in black? If the explanation of a ghost requires a graveyard, then Marino has one. A dozen people lie buried in a small burial plot on the farm and one of them, by gender and chronology, could qualify as the lady in black.

Levin D. Lewis (1818-1886) purchased the farm in 1857 and lies buried there next to his wife, Mary Ann (1831-1908), and three children, all of whom died in the 1860s before reaching the age of nine. Near them is the grave of Annie F. Willett Melson (1798-1872), Mary Ann's mother and Levin Lewis' mother-in-law, grandmother of the three children. Was the lady in black the grandmother returning to visit the three little boys whom she loved?

Without any such attempt to identify her, the Parks family kept

alive the story of the ghost of Marino. The seven Parks children — Henry F. Parks (1868-1931), Marcelline Parks Melson (1870-1958), Elizabeth Parks Custis (1873-1955), Otho T. Parks (1875-1951), Ella Grace Parks Wescott (1877-1943), Oscar Parks (1881-1969), and Everette P. Parks (1888-1947) — passed the story on to the next generation, the five oldest of them insisting that they were eyewitnesses to the ghost's existence.

Ella Wescott's daughter, Marguerite Whitehead lives today in Nasawadox, and is still recounting the story told to her by her mother and attested to by aunts and uncles.

Does the lady in black still come up the lane at four o'clock in the afternoon? If so, these days she has to perform her vanishing act before reaching the top of the porch stairs, for Marino burned to the ground on June 26, 1982, the victim of an arsonist. Today, only the graves remain for sure — and the story.

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Was wrecked ship named for Shore's Nathan F. Cobb?

Research reveals schooner was likely named for the son of shipbuilding Cobbs from Maine

The Eastern Shore's past is decorated by a wild concoction of colorful stories. Many of them have to do with the water, which should come as no surprise. Some of them are actually true, others not so much, but they are entertaining nonetheless.



Curtis Badger

Some of the best deal with Nathan F. Cobb, patriarch of the island family famed

for salvaging ships and carving duck decoys. Cobb and his family moved from Massachusetts around 1830 and settled on an island in Northampton County that bears their name. The Cobbs today are known for their highly collectible decoys, but in their time, they were known for salvaging ships that ran aground along the coast. Nathan and his three sons built a hotel on their island, a highly regarded resort in the years after the Civil War. They used profits from the salvage business to finance their retreat.

Before the U.S. Life-Saving Service was formed in 1871, the business of salvaging ships was a matter of private enterprise. Wreckers, as they were called, had a busi-



COURTESY PHOTO

In 1896 the schooner Nathan F. Cobb capsized after being caught in a northeaster off Frying Pan Shoals, N.C. The ship, pictured above, washed ashore on a sandbar off the coast of Ormond Beach, Fla.

ness relationship with ship owners to salvage cargo in exchange for a percentage of the goods. Often, they also saved the lives of crew members as well. It was a lucrative line of work for the Cobbs, and the family had a reputation among shippers as being fair and honest. They rescued many a mariner who wrecked along the island shoals.

Nathan Cobb died in March 1881, and not long after his passing a 656-ton, three-masted schooner named the Nathan F. Cobb was launched in Rockland, Maine, and soon began shipping freight among East Coast ports. Could the ship have been named for Nathan of Cobb's Island?

In December 1896 the schooner was loaded with lumber when it left port in Brunswick, Ga., bound for New York. After two days at sea the schooner encountered a northeaster off Frying Pan Shoals, N.C.

The ship capsized, the cook and a crewman were washed overboard and drowned, and the remaining crew members took shelter on board, unable to steer the disabled ship. They drifted southward on the northeast wind for four days and finally washed ashore on a sandbar off the coast of Ormond Beach, Fla., north of Daytona.

Coincidentally, the same northeaster that wrecked the ship Nathan F. Cobb also laid waste to the resort Nathan had built on Cobb's Island more than a half-century earlier. Fittingly, local folks salvaged the remains of the Nathan F. Cobb and built a cottage on Ormond Beach with lumber taken from the ship. The Cobb Cottage today still stands at 137 Orchard Lane and is part of the Ormond Beach Historic Trail.

Over the years, it became assumed that the ship Nathan F.

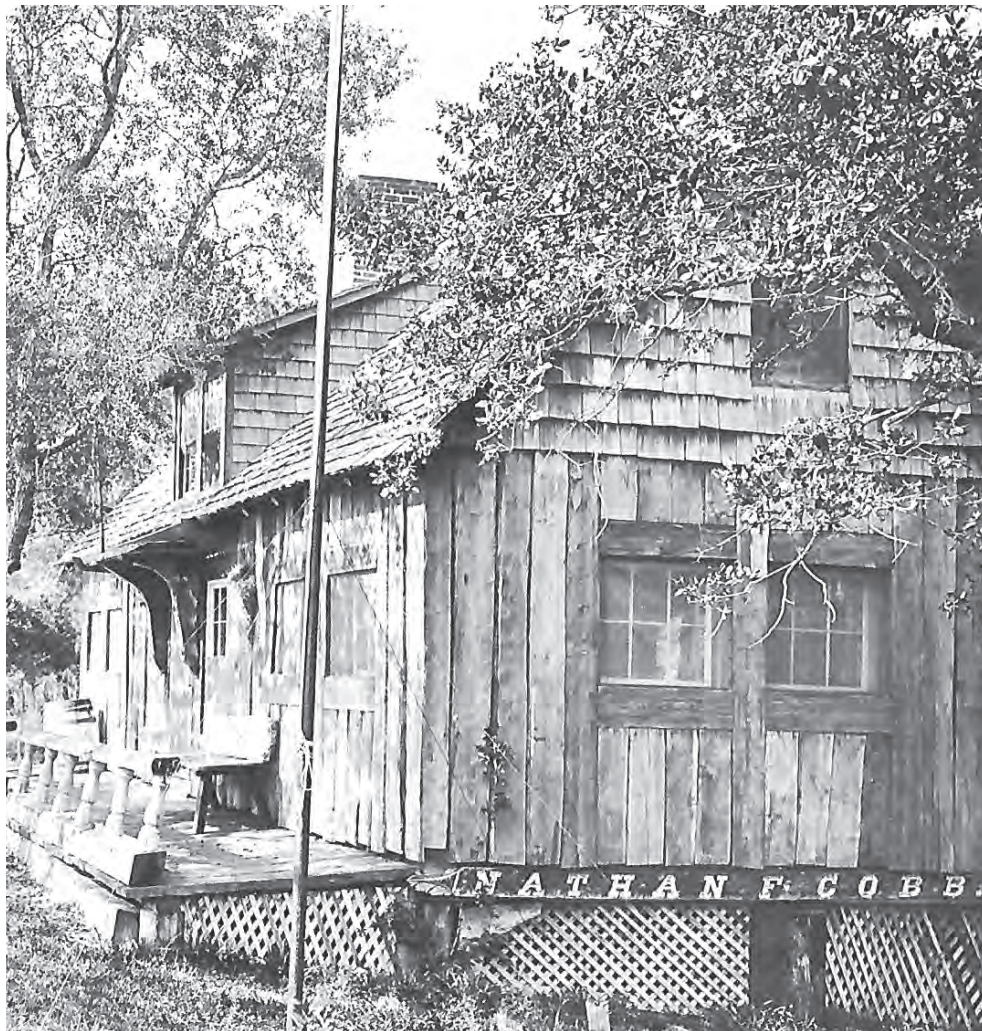
Cobb had been built in honor of Nathan Fosque Cobb Sr., the man who built one of America's leading resorts and who was a pioneer in the field of marine salvage. If you search the internet for "nathan cobb wreck," you will find numerous references linking Nathan Cobb with the wreck off Ormond Beach.

Unfortunately, there is no paper trail to substantiate this claim. Who commissioned the construction of the ship? Who paid the substantial cost? The Cobb family was well-known, especially in the maritime industry. If a 656-ton schooner were to be launched in memory of Nathan Cobb, it would have been on the front page of the Peninsula Enterprise and other newspapers. But there are no news stories.

A British ship registry offers a clue. Lloyd's Register of Shipping lists the schooner Nathan F. Cobb as having been built around

(Continued on page 15)

Curtis J. Badger is a Delmarva native who majored in English at Salisbury University and, with the exception of four years traveling as a U.S. Air Force photojournalist, has enjoyed a career photographing and writing about his native coast. His books include "Salt Tide: Cycles and Currents of Life Along the Coast," "Bellevue Farm: Exploring Virginia's Coastal Countryside," and many others. He lives in Accomack County.



COURTESY PHOTO

The wrecked schooner Nathan F. Cobb washed ashore on a sandbar off the coast of Ormond Beach, Fla. Locals salvaged the remains of the ship and built a cottage, pictured above, using the lumber that was recovered. The Cobb Cottage still stands today at 137 Orchard Lane and is part of the Ormond Beach Historic Trail.

Nathan F. Cobb

(Continued from page 14)

1890 in Rockland, Maine, by the Cobb-Butler Shipbuilding Company and owned by the Cobb-Wright Company, also of Rockland. Was Francis Cobb, the co-owner of the shipbuilding company, a relative of Nathan's?

"A History of the Cobb Family," published in 1923, indicates there was no familial relationship between the Cobbs of Massachusetts and the Cobbs of Rockland, Maine. But a closer look at the family tree of Francis and Martha Jane Cobb yields a clue as to the naming of the ship.

Francis Cobb married Martha

Jane Chandler (1820-1895) and together they had 11 children. The youngest was a son named Nathan Farwell Cobb, who was born in 1861 and died in 1943. The ship Nathan F. Cobb, which foundered in a storm in 1896 and washed ashore on Ormond Beach, was likely named for the youngest son of the shipbuilder, not for Nathan Fosque Cobb, who salvaged ships and built an island resort on the Eastern Shore.

The story of a northeast storm sinking a ship named for Nathan Cobb, while simultaneously laying waste to the island resort he built, was a tragedy. It was a drama for the ages, a narrative to be passed down for generations. But like many ancient stories, this one was too good to be true.



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Toastmasters Club sets event at library

The Toastmasters International Debedeavon Club will meet at the Eastern Shore Regional Library in Parksley to discover how Toastmasters can help build confidence in public speaking, strengthen listening and communication skills, and develop leadership abilities in a supportive environment.

It will be held Tuesday, Oct. 7, from 6 to 7 p.m. and is free and open to the public. It is also available online via Zoom.

For questions and the link to the online portion of event, email the club officers Dave Smith at president-750767@toastmastersclubs.org or Terri Patterson at VPE-750767@toastmastersclubs.org.

Visit <https://750767.toastmastersclubs.org>

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100 years ago
October 1925

Worcester jail breakers captured

Two of the four persons who escaped from Snow Hill jail last week have been re-arrested; one, so it is reported, has been located; and the fourth is still at large.

Dennie Pazella, who is said to have injured his foot in his jump from the second-story window to the pavement below, was caught at Crisfield. James Baker, the prisoner charged with the murder of the aged farmer, James A. Carey, of Whaleyville, Md., was apprehended at Chincoteague. Burnie Purnell, so it is said, has been located. Morris Scott is still at large.

Pazella is wanted on the charge of automobile theft, Purnell is wanted for illicit traffic of alcohol, and Scott is wanted for drunkenness and disorderly conduct.

Their exit was made by cutting out the window of a cell with a common case knife, and the jump was made to the brick pavement below. This was aided somewhat by an asbestos-covered heater pipe extending across the areaway from the courthouse to the jail.

The prisoners made a neat job of the window and left it unbroken in the cell. However, with so little means at hand to effect a permanent getaway, their arrest was soon brought about. The fourth man will, no doubt, be soon occupying his cell again — and this time all will be under more strict surveillance.

— *Worcester Democrat and the Ledger-Enterprise*

No license plates? No problem

Hog Island is the only place in Virginia and possibly one of the few in the United States where automobiles may come and go, yet the motor vehicle commissioner doesn't know anything about it and has no say in the matter.

The 21 Fords of the island that furnish joy rides for the 225 inhabitants on one of the finest driveways in the state, where the tide twice in 24 hours makes a new smooth surface, look extremely odd minus the license plate, and to the unacquainted, one would wonder how they get by with it.

The answer is: no county roads.

The island, which is seven miles long and three-quarters of a mile wide, with a beach second to none along the Atlantic seaboard,

lying directly east of Northampton County, has erected upon its area 40 dwellings, four general stores, a school, and a church, with the lighthouse towering 190 feet above the surface, together with the life-saving station and the adjacent radio compass establishment of the United States Navy.

Cattle, sheep, and the original Chincoteague ponies that run wild and feed on the marsh grass, each owner having their herd either branded or tagged through the ear, are raised on a commercial basis — the only business enterprise other than seafood and gunning.

— *The News and Advance*

Man escapes from asylum

M.R. Read, of Pungoteague, who was committed to the Eastern State Hospital for the Insane at Williamsburg in the summer of 1923, escaped from that institution last Thursday night. He turned up here today, calling on George E. Wise, a lawyer, with a view of having the courts decide whether he is crazy or not. He admits that he was insane when he was committed to the asylum but insists that he is in total possession of his wits at the present time.

Mr. Wise brought him to the police, and he was locked up pending communication with the authorities at Williamsburg.

According to Read, he got out of the asylum by sawing the bars of his cell on the fifth floor and letting himself down to the ground by means of an improvised rope made out of a bed spread and five sheets. He walked all the way to Richmond. He had \$1 in his pocket when he arrived.

He says that he owns a farm near Pungoteague and that his wife and three grown sons live on it. His wife used to come to see him at Williamsburg, but she discontinued her visits more than a year ago, according to his story.

The asylum authorities, he says, have always regarded him as a dangerous patient and for several months had refused to allow him any liberty at all.

He was committed to the institution July 5, 1923. Some time in September of that year, he came to his senses, he claims, and has since been entirely sane. He says that he is utterly at a loss to understand why they still insist that he is crazy.

— *The News and Advance*

75 years ago
October 1950

Churn, Shore Boy, moves up to New Orleans

Clarence Churn is another one of the Eastern Shore's contributions to the professional baseball ranks. He is a 20-year-old right-hander from Johnstontown, 15 miles north of Cape Charles.

He has been hurling for two years in the Pittsburgh Pirates farm system and has been assigned to the New Orleans Southern Association (AA) team next year as a reward for a successful season.

Churn, a husky 195-pounder, won 19 and lost 11 for the Hutchinson Western Association League club. During his maiden fling, the Virginian turned in a 12-8 record with the Uniontown Middle Atlantic league team.

Churn was signed by scout John "Poke" Whalen, former Eastern Shore League manager, during the summer of 1948.

Local baseball fans will have an opportunity to see Churn in action this Sunday, when the Cape Charles team visits the Delmar Railroaders in an exhibition game.

He stopped the Central Shore Leaguers with a one-hitter previously and also locked up with Ern Nichols in a 12-inning tie.

— *The Daily Times*

Coast Guard finds airmen

U.S. Coast Guardsmen today were chalking up another successful search in which they sighted three downed U.S. Navy flyers in the Atlantic and directed a destroyer to their rescue.

The Navy airmen, none of whom were injured, went down at 4:15 p.m. Wednesday about 20 miles southeast of Chincoteague and were picked up by the destroyer Saufley at 6:40 p.m.

Rescued were Lt. C.P. Blades, USN, the pilot; P.W. Greenlee, USN, aviation radioman third class; and Donald Sapp, USN, aviation technician third class.

The plane, attached to the carrier Palalu, was on a routine training mission when the pilot was forced to ditch due to a "failure of power," the Navy reported. Seven planes from the carrier, two Coast Guard planes, and two other Navy planes from the Norfolk Naval Air Station took part in the search for the downed flyers.

The Coast Guard planes were the first to sight flares, the raft, and survivors at 6:25 p.m. One of them, a B-17,

(Continued on page 18)

Yesteryears

(Continued from page 17)

directed the destroyer to the raft while the other plane, a medium patrol bomber, circled the raft.

The men were moved from the destroyer back to their carrier by helicopter.

The Saufley is the destroyer that rescued many Puerto Ricans after the plane they were aboard crashed into the Atlantic several months ago.

— *Ledger-Star*

Electric chair verdict handed down

Alfred Rayfield, 35, from near Parksley, was sentenced to die in the electric chair in Accomack County Court yesterday for the knife slaying of William West, 59, on Aug. 16.

Judge Jeff F. Walter, judge of the 31st Judicial Circuit, passed the sentence after the jury returned a unanimous verdict of murder in the first degree at 4:55 p.m. yesterday. The jury was out for three hours.

Rayfield had been convicted twice before for attempted murder — once in October 1945, when he was sentenced to one year and again in October 1947, when he was given two years in the Virginia State penitentiary.

Commonwealth's Attorney E. Almer Ames Jr. said Rayfield had a grudge against West because he had interfered in his relationship with West's son's wife. West's son and wife both testified for the state.

The testimony revealed that around 6 a.m. on Aug. 16, Rayfield went to West's home at White's Neck, near Parksley, and stabbed West in the chest with a long bladed pocket knife.

Defense counsel E. Edward Downing entered a plea of self defense.

Rayfield was sentenced to die on Nov. 17, 1950.

— *The Daily Times*

50 years ago
October 1975

Professor expert in dialect study

Have you ever been caught in a “light-wood-knotfloater” (a torrential downpour)? Ever carried a small amount of groceries in a

“toot” (a paper bag), ever played on a “hickey horse” (a see saw), ever heard of a “swamp angel” (country cousin), ever been “owly” (angry)?

Did your car ever go “cattywampus” (out of control)? Have you ever heard of a “volunteer” (a baby born out of wedlock)? Ever tasted “bust head” or “pop skull” (homemade whiskey)?

The above are only a fraction of the picturesque often piquant words in active use in various geographic areas of the United States. These words were selected from the dialect cataloguing of Dr. Mervyn Williamson, professor of English and linguistics at Lynchburg College.

For the past 10 years, Dr. Williamson has been studying pronunciation, vocabulary, speech patterns, and general characteristics and gathering language lore with a concentration in the southeastern states, especially in Virginia. He also teaches a course in dialects at the college.

If one travels throughout Virginia, one can hear not only titillating, exotic nouns and convoluted or extremely simplified verb forms, but phrases and styles of speaking that go back as far as 14th-century England.

Shakespeare's English and that of the King James translation of the Bible still lend color and flavor of 16th- and 17th-century England to the speech of some families and individuals whose forebears have lived for generations on Tangier Island.

The greater part of Dr. Williamson's study has been actual work in the field. Equipped with a tape recorder, note pad, an oral questionnaire, a sharp ear and keen interest, and an ability to just “chew the fat,” he has accumulated a vast amount of firsthand information.

In nearly every instance, people to whom he has been directed or upon whom he has stumbled have been eager and pleased to talk with Williamson and offer whatever help they can, although, on occasion, self consciousness may have inhibited the interviewee from speaking in his or her natural way.

Why does language change so slowly in some areas, whereas in others the change is so rapid that almost daily updating of dictionaries would be necessary to keep pace with the creation of new words, changes in the meaning of words in common use, and the growing use of professional jargon.

Dr. Williamson, other linguists, anthropologists, and sociologists have determined that areas where population is sparse and remote; where the population experiences few or no new

people entering the area or community, except in the instance of births; where formal education is limited or nonexistent; where the effects of modern technology are as yet minimal or not detectable — these are the areas where change in language is most conservative; hence, the presence of words and their forms and meanings may seem quaint, delightfully colorful, archaic, and even alien to those who live in more mobile, densely populated societies where world and national events, education, and the news and entertainment media are constantly adding to, changing, and subtracting from the language.

— *The News and Advance*

25 years ago
October 2000

Tangier remains delicate balance of tourism, tradition

Just before noon on warm weekends, the golf carts line up along the whitewashed waterfront of Tangier Island, their drivers eagerly awaiting the boats bringing in the latest catch: tourists.

While the men of Tangier Island are out coaxing succulent blue crabs from the surrounding Chesapeake like their fathers and grandfathers before them, their daughters angle for dollars, too, by offering golf cart tours of this tiny island when the day ferries disgorge their camera-toting human cargo.

The Captain Eulice and the Chesapeake Breeze sail in from mainland Virginia about 14 miles away. The Courtney Thomas, the daily mail boat, and the Stephen Thomas arrive from Crisfield, Md.

When they do, this remote fishing outpost — a crescent-shaped spit of land barely 5 miles by 1 1/2 miles — holds nearly as many curious visitors as it does townspeople (for a few hours, at least). They wander the narrow streets, marveling at the lilting speech of the locals and the practical custom of forsaking cars for scooters, bicycles, and golf carts.

They pose for pictures in front of gravestones that share space in manicured front yards with satellite dishes.

For some of Tangier's 650 year-round residents, the flood of fairweather visitors represents the island's best hope of surviving, as its watermen, buffeted by a dwindling number

(Continued on page 19)

Yesteryears

(Continued from page 18)

of crabs and a host of new regulations, struggle to hang on.

But others fear that the same tourists who bring in much-needed dollars could hasten the destruction of the unique environment that lures them.

“The thing that bothers me about tourists — they don’t have no respect at all,” says Edward V. Parks, 52, a waterman and former councilman. “They think, ‘We’re tourists and we have the run of the island.’”

In many ways, Tangier’s plight is like that of any small community fighting to endure in the face of a dying way of life. Except that Tangier is not just any community.

The island’s inhabitants still carry the names and accents of ancestors who sailed from Cornwall in 1778. Parkses and Pruitts, Crocketts and Dises — their family trees intricately intertwined like thick kudzu vines. On Sunday mornings, they fill the island’s two churches, God-fearing folk who disdain worldly temptations. The sale of alcohol is banned on Tangier. There is no McDonald’s. No movie theater.

A few years ago, in fact, the Town Council rebuffed a Hollywood offer to showcase the island on the silver screen and rake in some big bucks, declaring that the Paul Newman/Kevin Costner movie “Message in a Bottle” was too racy and would have to be filmed elsewhere. And it was only after a lively debate this summer that island leaders reluctantly decided to allow dancing at the annual homecoming celebration.

“Maybe we sound prudish,” says Jean Crockett, 50, the island’s nurse and English teacher. “When we’ve had dances in the past, there was always someone who would sneak in alcohol and there would be a little roughness. This is a family-oriented community.”

In close-knit Tangier, personal milestones are shared by all. Open invitations to baby showers and funerals are tacked beside one another on the post office door.

Comfortable in their isolation, residents blur their roles. The island’s only police officer doubles as its garbage man. Mayor R. Dewey Crockett, Jean Crockett’s husband, is also assistant principal of Tangier Combined School, music director at Swain United Methodist Church, and the undertaker.

“It’s a very small community, and they like that security,” says David L. Shores, a Tangier

native and retired Old Dominion University professor who just published a book about Tangier. “As one waterman said, ‘We’re all kin together.’”

But the postcard-pretty waterfront, soft marsh grasses, and pristine white beach that make Tangier a gem also mask the threats to its existence. Erosion, the hardships of crabbing, and precious few jobs make it hard for today’s island children to imagine living their lives here.

As he sailed to a moonlit crab shanty just offshore, James “Ooker” Eskridge, 42, a third-generation waterman, wondered whether his 21-year-old son would be the last in his family to work the bay. Last year, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission put a freeze on crabbing licenses to help rejuvenate the crab population.

“Something like that is death to the community,” Eskridge said.

And that’s on top of catch limits and a 660-square-mile sanctuary nearby that is off-limits to crabbers and competition from foreign markets.

“You hear watermen say, ‘The last thing I want my boy to do is work on the water,’” said Jeff Crockett, who heads the association representing Tangier’s 150 watermen. “Inside you know they are sad we might be the last generation. It’s not the work; it’s all the forces that are massed against us.”

Some people here think that transforming Tangier into a popular tourist destination is the answer, as it would put extra cash in the watermen’s pockets and might prompt state and federal officials to invest in preservation.

Today, several families run golf cart or boat tours. There are a few gift shops and restaurants. Fence posts sport wooden “recipe boxes” so that tourists using the honor system can toss in a quarter and take a weathered recipe for corn pudding or shrimp-and-crab casserole. The state has set aside \$160,000 for a tourism center, though no site has been determined.

Even so, Tangier remains largely unknown compared with nearby Smith Island or Chincoteague, and there are indications that a little promotion would go a long way.

When Bell Atlantic featured the island in a commercial several years ago, tourism spiked for a time.

Wallace Pruitt, 60, owner of Shirley’s Bayview Inn and a former waterman, says his guests are “the nicest people.” He says there’s plenty of opportunity for his neighbors to benefit, too.

— *The Free Lance-Star*

Shore First

The Eastern Shore of Virginia's
monthly newsmagazine

Published at the beginning
of each month
since May 2017

A PUBLICATION
OF CAPE MEDIA LLC

Physical address:
3257B Main Street
Exmore, VA 23350

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 517
Onley, VA 23418

TELEPHONE: 757-789-7678
FAX: 757-787-7681

JIM RITCH

Publisher

publisher@easternshorepost.com

WILLIAM E. SHOCKLEY III

Editor, General Manager

editor@easternshorepost.com

RYAN WEBB

Assistant Editor

ryan@easternshorepost.com

MEGAN LEWIS

Advertising Manager

ads@easternshorepost.com

CONTRIBUTORS

CURTIS BADGER

SARAH BARBAN

LAURA DAVIS

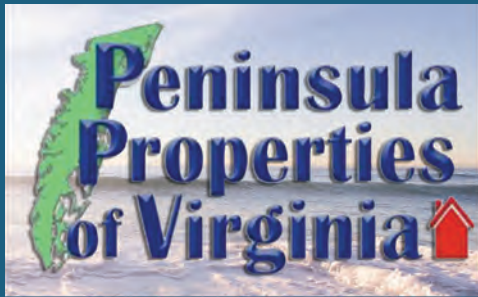
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The small town encompasses 165 acres and is located in Accomack County along the central spine of Lankford Highway (US Rte 13), the main thoroughfare that runs N/S through Virginia's Eastern Shore. Melfa was developed around the railroad that came to town in 1884 with a station built that year. In the early 1900s Melfa flourished and was the site of several industries—a canning factory, bottling company, three sawmills, two dairies, a barrel factory and two hatcheries. In 1951 the town was incorporated with the purchase of a fire engine.

The town's unincorporated boundaries from bayside to seaside make for a unique community today standing alone from the rest of Virginia's Eastern Shore:

1. AIRPORT (5000+ FT. RUNWAY) & INDUSTRIAL PARK
2. FIRE AND RESCUE COMPANY, VA STATE POLICE BARRACKS
3. COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
4. YACHT & COUNTRY CLUB WITH SEVERAL HIGH END HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS
5. CHURCHES OF SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY.

A quick look below reveals some statistics on residence and land sales since 2021. The median prices for both house and land sales are trending upwards which shows value is there. Melfa with a population of fewer than 500, and it's surrounding unincorporated areas is a great place to raise a family or retire. Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital, opened in 2019 is a state-of-the-art facility and cancer center is less than 5 miles from Melfa.

Homebuyers come to Melfa and see for yourselves Eastern shores best kept little secret!

2025 (1/1/25 to 9/30/25)

8 residences sold btw \$160,000 and \$510,000. Median \$307,500
0 land sale; 1 under contract—MLS 63717 \$74,900
3 Residence active—MLS 60604 \$249,500; MLS 64810 \$458,000; MLS 65195 \$80,000
3 Land active—MLS 63638; MLS 64455 \$623,000 MLS 60604 \$157,500 (Featured Listing)

2024

7 residences sold btw \$70,000 and \$357,000. Median \$187,000
2 land parcels sold: \$95,000 and \$420,000. Median \$257,500

2023

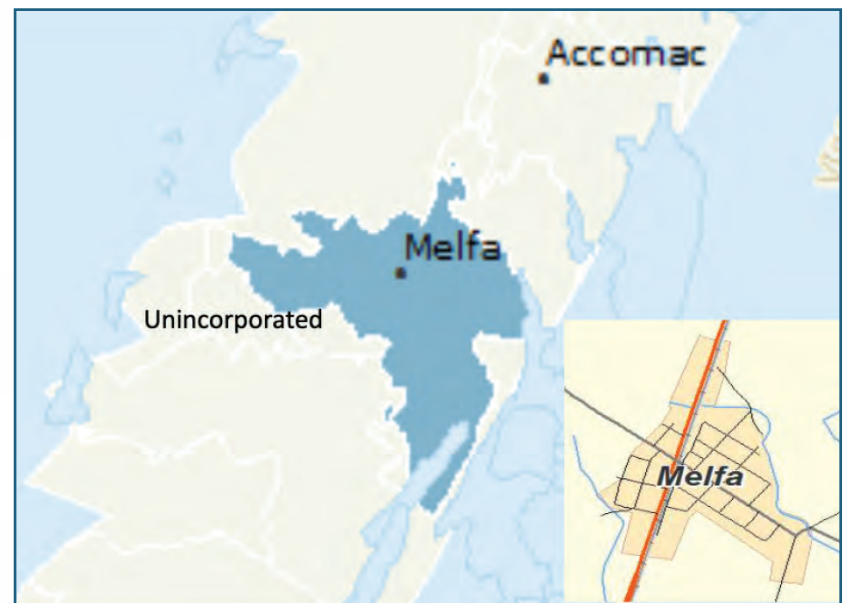
10 residences sold btw \$65,000 and \$325,000. Median \$227,000
5 land parcels sold btw \$10,000 and \$119,500. Median \$37,000

2022

18 residences sold btw \$45,000 and \$2,275,000. Median \$209,500
2 land parcels sold btw \$39,500 and \$96,000. Median \$135,500

2021

11 residences sold btw \$35,000 and \$315,000. Median \$175,000
3 land parcels sold btw \$6,000 and \$70,000. Median \$9,000



*Data obtained from the Eastern Shore Association of REALTORS MLS. Information contained herein believed accurate but not warranted.