

February 2016

Northumberland Preservation, Inc. (NPI)
PO Box 65, Wicomico Church, VA 22579



It's nearly three decades now since the nonprofit Northumberland Preservation, Inc., NPI, found itself the proud owner of Shiloh School 1906-1929. Local farmers James and Emily Hudnall had used the one-room as a granary ... no alterations since initial construction, and therefore ideal for restoration, once freed of its smothering vines.

Undaunted, a group of volunteers and then-NPI President Charles Davis set out determined to save the building and its history. Thanks to Charles's widow, Ada Clarke Davis (to friends "AC"), we know the group consisted of Bob Byrne, Charles Davis, Lew Fleming, Philip McKenney, and Dwight Taylor, all no longer living.



Charles Davis

NPI's current directors, listed below, recognizing those predecessors' amazing contributions now honor them and their efforts, and those of many other volunteers, with a memorial donation acknowledging their efforts.

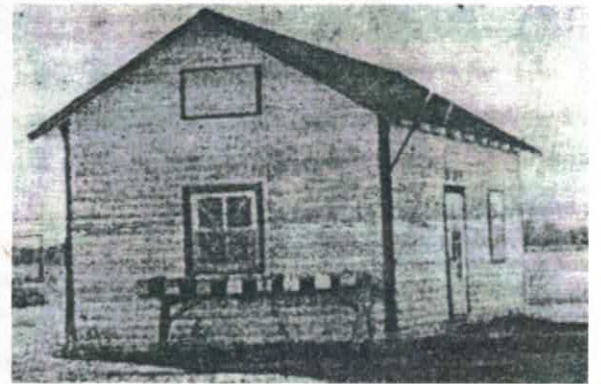
2016 NPI board members are Jack Moore, President; Debbie Gillispie Vice President; Syd Garriss, Secretary; Les Kilduff, Treasurer; with Susan Cockrell, Richard Ingram, Charlene Talcott, Martha Tallent, and Bud Ward.



Memories of early 1900s life in Ditchley: There once was a Ditchley Post Office, closed during the Eisenhower administration along with countless other small U.S. rural post offices. Ditchley P.O. had opened in 1913 when Ditchley was a menhaden processing center. Its first postmaster, Thomas Hurst, Jr., served until 1925 when he was succeeded by Mrs. Thomas Gough, who lived in a big white farm house on Joseph Ball Lane. Mrs. Gough conducted business from her house rather than from the tiny building just beyond her side door. She was always there—no hours of business posted.

Mrs. Pauline Voss succeeded Mrs. Gough. Her post office was larger than the earlier one, but still a tiny frame building on Ditchley Rd., near former number, RR#1882, Clarence Cook's residence. Ditchley patrons lost their community meeting place when Mrs. Voss retired.

When the post office closed each day, Mrs. Voss would put the remaining mail in boxes outside for customer convenience. The 55-year old post office was discontinued in 1968, and thereafter service was by "Rural Route, Kilmarnock." Before that the only address needed was "Joe Jones on Dividing Creek." *Recollections of Barton Marshall excerpted from a Dividing Creek Assn. newsletter, date unknown.*



Ditchley Post Office, 1968

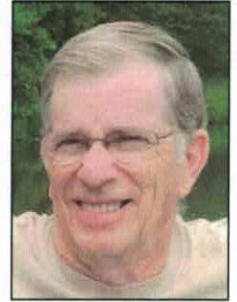
Partnerships: The Master Naturalist program is a statewide corps of volunteers providing education, outreach, and service dedicated to the management of natural resources in their community. Training and volunteer service is required to become a Master Naturalist. The Northern Neck chapter uses Shiloh School for classes, and now offers a dedicated volunteer to coordinate school programs there, using Shiloh as the "jumping off" spot for visits to Hughlett Point and Dameron Marsh.

Mary Ball Washington Museum and Library (MBWML), Lancaster, is a partner of NPI, and plans will be made to provide programs on history for school children; it's a natural fit. MBWML has a program featuring one-room school houses; the Standards of Learning for VA public schools incorporate visits to one-room schools for 1st graders. NPI-Shiloh has hosted these children in past years with living history interpretation. Now, we expect to cooperate, serving area children to make history come alive.

“Spring has sprung. The grass is ris. I wonder where the birdies is? They say the birds is on the wing. Ain’t that absurd? I thought the wing was on the bird.” Pardon the doggerel. Frequently attributed to Ogden Nash, though anonymous, ca 1920.

SPRING PROGRAMS

NPI, with the Northern Neck Audubon Society, invites you to a birding expedition on Mon., Mar.14 at 1:00 PM. Frank Schaff, assisted by Linda Schaff, will lead the bird walk. Those new to birding are invited especially, and the Schaffs will have extra binoculars for those needing them. Meet at Shiloh School for briefing and introductions, including Shiloh “speaking” to you about its history. NPI will have a water bottle and a granola bar for you in preparation for the walk. From Shiloh, we will car pool to a natural area preserve, where we may see a variety of tundra swans, ducks, gulls, blue herons, and more. Songbirds may include red-winged blackbirds, woodpeckers, and a variety of warblers, swallows, wrens, and other songbirds. Enjoy learning while you breathe fresh air, exercise, and marvel at the scenery. *Thanks to a grant from Audubon, the school has a portapotty.*



NPI and Dividing Creek Assn. invite you to a talk and walk on Sat., April 9 at 9:30 AM presented by June Hudnall Turnage. Your hosts will supply OJ and donut holes as you gather to listen to June’s story. No one is better qualified than June to tell you about the history of the area. Her first few years were spent at Hardings Wharf, and she grew up at Rehoboth. She now lives in the Cobbs Hall neighborhood. Her ancestors helped to settle the area from colonial times--and on. Recently retired from the NPI board, June played a key role in the restoration of Shiloh 1906, where her mother, Dale Stuart Hudnall, was a student. She will point out a variety of early sites, and then walk to the Ball cemetery across the road, for further historical interpretation. *Dividing Creek Assn. is described on page 3 of this newsletter.*

NPI, with Native Plant Society, Northern Neck Chapter, invites you to “Imperfection: Gardening in the 21st Century,” drawing together good gardening practices with the need to help wildlife and the environment. The presentation is slated for Sun., Apr. 17 at 3:00 PM. Master Gardener, member of both NPS and NPI, a skilled and knowledgeable teacher, Anne Olsen will address this topic, involving conservation practices. Anne’s Shiloh School talk a few years ago on native plants had the little one-room schoolhouse bursting with standing room only. Attendees clamored for more from Anne. Come early on Apr. 17th. Refreshments will be served. “Recess” after all your questions are answered! You may want to join Native Plant Society and NPI after this program!



Anne Olsen visits a garden in France

Sat., May 14 will be a fun-filled day at Shiloh Schools! NPI invites you to come and stay, or come and go as your schedule permits. For information, call Charlene Talcott, 804.462.0227.



5-6 PM—Meet new friends and hear about plans for Shiloh Schools and NPI

6-7 PM—Bring a potluck snack or hors d’oeuvres to share; NPI will provide drinks, cutlery, paper goods

continued next page

7-8 (dusk)—Making its third appearance, the Shiloh String Band will offer songs of the sea and bay

8-dark-11 PM—Rappahannock Astronomy Club will present a star party, beginning inside the school with an introduction to astronomy, then moving outside to observe celestial happenings with RAC members' telescopes; all lights out, please!



Listen to the local radio for cancellation of this portion of the program in case of cloudy skies



On Sat., June 11, 9:00 AM to about 2:00 PM, Northumberland Association for Progressive Stewardship (NAPS) and NPI-Shiloh will offer a unique educational opportunity, an ECO-TOUR led by waterman, Capt. Danny Crabbe. You will board his boat, "Kit II" at his dock in Ophelia, to tour the Little Wicomico River and the Bay. Only 25 tickets are available, \$20 per person, to learn about the ecology of the Chesapeake Bay from a true waterman. Meet at 8:30 AM at Shiloh School to car pool to the boat dock; directions will be available at the school. Bring brown bag lunches/snacks and water bottles/drinks.



This trip is designed for people of all ages, with families especially welcome. Lee Allain, NAPS, reports that the Eco-Tour experience provides up-close and personal insight into our Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Become familiar with how to be a steward of this fantastic natural resource - to return the Bay to productive health. It will be fun, too. How do you hold a crab without getting pinched? Learn how to tong, to open an oyster, to pull a crab trap; view a local pound net and historic Smith Point light; see herons, gulls, cormorants, and eagles in close proximity. *For reservations & payment, call Jane Towner, 804.435.3566.*



Dividing Creek Assn. (DCA) Links Hughlett Point and Shiloh School): DCA began as a neighborhood group, gathering to roast oysters, get acquainted, and have fun. Then came shocking news: a developer proposed to construct a large hotel with a 350-seat restaurant, plus numerous private residences on Hughlett Point. DCA neighbors had tramped the woods and strolled on the beach, inspired by the pristine beauty of nature in this quiet, lovely, cherished place, and we were outraged by the proposal—development on land that doesn't "perk," spoiling its natural beauty.

DCA began fund raising to convince the state's Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to purchase Hughlett Point, saving it for all citizens and for future generations. More than \$15,000 was raised, and along with funds from Audubon friends, DCA inspired DCR to purchase Hughlett Point, making it a Natural Area Preserve in 1994. Under the DCR's Natural Heritage Program, all preserves become the ultimate conservation easement, protected by law. Dividing Creek Assn. didn't stop there. Members became volunteer stewards of Hughlett Point and organized for nonprofit status in Virginia and with the IRS. DCA gives funds every

year to Hughlett Point. Shiloh School, standing nearby, looking forlorn, useless and empty, seemed the perfect spot for education and interpretation of the preserve. DCA added NPI, owner of Shiloh School, to its annual budget, encouraging NPI to restore the old building for use by the community, and especially those visiting the nature preserves.

Two people, members of both DCA and NPI, and stewards of Hughlett Point, Jane Towner and June Turnage, began restoration at Shiloh, and opened the one-room school house for the first time in 15 years in 2006, the 100th anniversary of Shiloh School 1906. Nearly 400 curious visitors came to an open house, taking turns to peek into the unaltered school.

Now stabilized and restored by NPI volunteers, Shiloh School's facilities are available to DCA and other nonprofits with an interest in nature and history. Thanks to DCA's interest and enthusiasm the school bell rings again at Shiloh!

Thank you, DCA, for ongoing financial support of both Hughlett Point and Shiloh School. NPI welcomes DCA and its new president, Robert Gary, especially on April 9, 2016, 9:30 AM, when June Turnage will speak at Shiloh about local history. *Jane Towner and June Turnage*

Educational sign for Shiloh School 1884-1906: Jack Moore, 2016 president of NPI, reports that Creative Designs, White Stone, has executed a new plaque for the 1884 schoolhouse. A grant to NPI from The Tidewater Foundation (Holly Ball) made this possible. When installed this spring, visitors can read about the school, whenever they stop by. Please do! The plaque reads as follows:

“This Shiloh School was built in 1884 on Ball family land at the south corner of Ball Lane and Ball Neck Road, about six tenths of a mile from here. It served as a school for area children until the end of the 1906 school year. It was then moved down Ball Lane and for about a century was used as a small home, a chicken coop, and a humble storage shed.

“1884” was given to Northumberland Preservation, Inc. in 2010 by W.T. Thompson. His grandmother, Isabelle Ball Baker attended this school as did her siblings including Jessie Ball who would one day become Jessie Ball duPont. Jessie Ball was the last person to serve as teacher in the 1884 building and served as the first teacher in the 1906 Shiloh School.

“NPI stabilized and moved the building to its present location. The last several years have been spent restoring the building to its original configuration including reinstalling a window in the back wall and replacing the window sashes and frames as well as most of the outside siding. The original floor joists were reinforced. The mortise and tenon building frame, interior walls, door, and most of the floor are original.”

Restored by Northumberland Preservation, Inc.

Jack Moore, Chair of the NPI Property Committee, and President of NPI and his volunteers, are honored by a gift from Rhea and Irving Talley. Thank you. Contributions to honor and memorialize a friend or family are welcome and acknowledged.

NPI is a local nonprofit, educational charity. We are totally dependent on contributions through membership dues (basic--\$15/person; \$30/couple). Additionally, donations of money, volunteer time and talent, are essential to meet operational, program, and restoration/maintenance expenses. Without your contribution, this historical site and its history will be lost. Please join us in 2016. All gifts are tax-deductible. Make checks payable to NPI and send to PO Box 65, Wicomico Church, VA 22579. Thank you!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

