



EASTERN SHORE PUBLIC
LIBRARY FOUNDATION



The Eastern Shore of Virginia

HERITAGE CENTER

BACKGROUND

The Eastern Shore is a Bedrock of the Nation's History



THE VISION FOR THE NEW ESVA HERITAGE CENTER

The new Heritage Center's vision is to protect, preserve, and make accessible all current and future collections of verbal and photographic records of the 400 year history and genealogy of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

For centuries, the unique geography of the Eastern Shore of Virginia has fostered an equally distinct culture and economy within the United States. Given that special standing, the preservation of its heritage is critical. The Heritage Center will serve as a premier resource for genealogists, historians, humanities students and scholars on local, regional and national levels. It will become a resource for local schools and students, will solve the current space and climate problems and will provide the necessary infrastructure for the library's vital collections.



BACKGROUND

Preserving Our Heritage: The Need for the Heritage Center



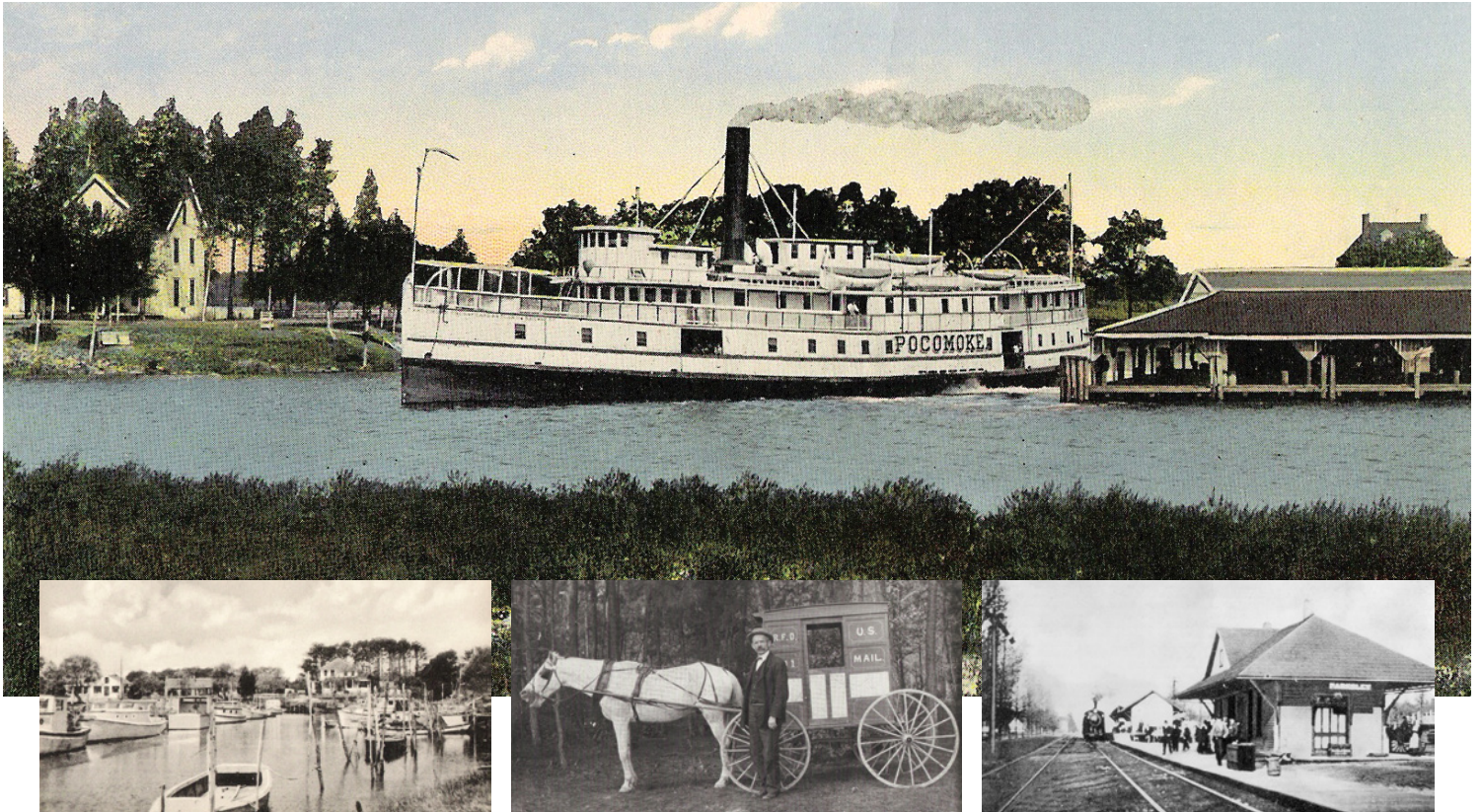
The Eastern Shore badly needs a safe place to assemble and showcase the materials documenting our rich history.

The current collection, stored in the Eastern Shore Room and in locations scattered around the old library, has been called by Kellee Blake, the former Director of the Mid-Atlantic region of the National Archives, “among the finest historical collections I have ever seen”. She also says, “Many of the records remain improperly housed, deteriorating, and at risk.”

Also, fine collections have been donated to the library but have not yet been accepted due to a lack of space. Other valuable collections have of necessity been donated to institutions off the Shore due to lack of adequate space to store and display them. We need a place for them to safely stay home on the Shore.

PROJECT DETAILS

Preserving Our History



SHORE HISTORY REQUIRES PRESERVATION:

The documents, photographs, materials and newspaper articles highlighting the different periods of Shore History dating from the 1600s will be preserved with room to be proudly displayed, such as:

- The early days of governance and the Eastern Shore role in Virginia History,
 - The changing names of Eastern Shore counties,
 - The evolving transportation systems over centuries: sailing, then steamships, then the railroads, finally the trucks and the highways,
- The evolving and historical economic engines of the Shore:
 - » The watermen and the crabbing, oystering, and fishing industries,
 - » The agriculture and farming culture: the history-making Produce Exchange,
 - » The History of the Barrier Islands, the Hunt Clubs,
 - » The coming of the Naval Air Station, Wallops Island and NASA,
 - » Tourism today.

BACKGROUND

Scope of Collections

The new Heritage Center will house the largest and best organized collection of books, manuscripts, photographs, and other material relating to the history, genealogy, and culture of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Dating to the 1600's, these mark the earliest European contact with North America. They bear witness to the birth and development of European settlement in the Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay region. This includes the library's existing unique local history collection of over one thousand books and thousands of documents.



Kellee Blake and Miles Barnes



Collection Development

Two large and important collections - those of local historian Kirk C. Mariner and of African-American historian Frances B. Latimer are currently stored off-site, for lack of space in the current facility.

A larger facility designed to preserve archives will house these and many other collections and establish the Heritage Center as the premier place for local

historians' collections, keeping them on the Shore. This is particularly timely as we know of several collectors of Shore memorabilia wishing for a place to preserve their collections on the Shore.



A portion of Kirk Mariner's Collection awaiting a home



Frances Latimer

PROJECT DETAILS

Heritage Center Facility Overview

The new Eastern Shore Heritage Center will be a modern, technologically up-to-date facility which will serve the Shore's citizens well into the future.

1 Digitization Station



Families will duplicate their scrapbooks, photographs, and Bible records to share with relatives and future generations. High quality scanning equipment

will enable the public and staff to digitize print materials. Access to the collections will be provided worldwide with scanned images available online. The public will not need to handle the original documents, preserving them from damage.

2 Memory Lab



Families lose treasured records of celebrations when technology changes making recordings inaccessible. Outdated media like 33mm, slides, cassettes,

VHS, and vinyl can be re-recorded with the Memory Lab's equipment so that children can view their grandparents' family reunions of yesteryear with today's devices.

3 Dennis Custis Lecture Hall



Historians will tell local children the pirate stories of the Shore's Barrier Islands. Genealogists will make new connections to long-lost relatives with classes and

database search demonstrations. The family historian will learn how to protect family records from natural disasters with

instruction by professional archivists. The large group instruction room will make public history programming possible with access to primary documents and online resources.

4 Preservation Lab

Trained staff will accept donations of documents and photographs because space will be available to store them. New materials will be prepared for searchable databases and stored to prevent deterioration in a secure location. Volunteers will learn these techniques to share with other local history organizations and their families.

5 Climate Controlled Security

Valuable collections of papers and photographs will be protected from the high humidity and extreme temperatures of the Eastern Shore. Specialized dehumidification, vapor-barrier, and control systems will give donors confidence in deeding their archival collections to the Heritage Center. A "dry" sprinkler system and modern wall coverings will add additional security from fire.



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