

Office of the County Executive

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CECIL COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Department of Planning and Zoning
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2300, Elkton, MD 21921

June 19, 2013

Douglas Bland & Debra Lovejoy Bland
19 Port Herman Road
Chesapeake City, MD 21915

RE: Nomination for Historic Designation – Town Point School No. 4

Dear Mr. Bland & Ms. Lovejoy Bland:

I am pleased to inform you that the Cecil County Council, at their meeting of June 18th, voted to approve your nomination of the above referenced property as a historic site. It should be noted that items of historical significance on the structure include the original pine clapboards, double sash windows, and stone foundation.

Thank you for your interest in preserving Cecil County's historical heritage. If you have any questions regarding your historic designation, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Sennstrom".

Eric S. Sennstrom, Director
Planning & Zoning

CECIL COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2013
12:00 p.m.

Present: Pat Doordan, Chairman; Ken Wiggins, Vice Chairman; Stewart Yust; Wyatt Wallace; Bill Miners; Geoff Doyle; Diana Broomell; Clara Campbell, Esq; Mark Woodhull; Kordell Wilen; Lloyd Harmon; Eric Sennstrom; Tony Di Giacomo, and Jennifer Bakeoven.

Absent: Tom Mullen – Alternate.

Call to Order: Chairman Doordan called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes: Mr. Wallace made a motion for approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miners. All approve. Motion carried.

1. NOMINATION FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Name of Property: Town Point School, No. 4

Property Owners: Douglas Bland and Debra Lovejoy-Bland

Property Address: 19 Port Herman Road, Chesapeake City, MD 21915

Tax Map: 47 Parcel: 7

Presently Zoned: Rural Residential (RR)

Eric Sennstrom, Director – Planning & Zoning, appeared and presented an overview of the nomination. (See P&Z office for copy of application).

The Historic District Commission has forwarded their recommendation of approval for this nomination. The County Council will hear this nomination on June 4, 2013.

DPW and the Health Department had no comments.

Chairman Doordan asked if anyone would like to speak in favor or in opposition of this nomination. No one spoke.

A motion for the approval of this nomination was made by Mr. Wiggins.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Wallace.

All approve. The motion for the recommendation of approval was carried.

2. TEXT AMENDMENT: ZONING ORDINANCE

SUMMARY – Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, Article XI, Part III [Floodplain District], Language changes in Sections 16, 224, 228, 229, 230, 231 & 233.

Eric Sennstrom, Director – Planning & Zoning, appeared and presented an overview of the text amendment.

CECIL COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
April 2, 2013

Present: Diggins, Milt; Dixon, Mike; Edwards, Ron & Audrey; Folk, Patricia; Simperts, Nancy; Black, David

Absent: Ricketts, Stephanie; Sennstrom, Eric

Guests: Bland, Doug & Debbie

Call to Order: Chairperson Folk called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The January meeting minutes were approved by the acclamation of the Historic District Commission.

New Business: Mr. Black provided a brief overview of the application by the Bland's to nominate Town Point School No. 4 for historic designation. Mr. Bland noted that school commissioners purchased the property for \$50 in 1877 in an effort to erect a school. The one room schoolhouse was constructed in 1877 at a cost of \$420. This school replaced an earlier school erected in 1859. The structure was used for a school until it was closed in 1938. The building was used for a period as a grocery store and then as a residence to the present day. The schoolhouse still has its original pine clapboards and double sash windows. The stone foundation has been repointed and preserved. The interior has been remodeled and two additions have been added over the years with the first occurring in 1920 and the second in 2002. Mrs. Bland related that through her nursing occupation she had met individuals that had been students at the school. Discussion ensued regarding the exterior attributes as well as the interior of the structure. Mr. Black noted that the application would be heard by the Planning Commission on Monday, April 15, 2013. He further stated that the Planning Commission will review the application and make a recommendation to the County Council who will decide whether or not to grant the request for historic designation.

Motion was made by Nancy Simperts to recommend approval of the nomination for historic designation. Motion was seconded by Audrey Edwards. All members present voted in favor of motion. Motion carried.

Chairperson Folk inquired as to whether there were any prospective nominees that may be coming forward in the near future. Ms. Edwards indicated that she was working with an entity that may nominate for designation. Chairperson Folk indicated that she has identified an individual to do the necessary research on her dwelling.

Old Business: Mr. Black indicated that he had received two testimonials from previously designated properties attesting to the ease of the nomination process as well as the importance of preserving the

County's historical heritage. The testimonials were received from Mrs. Crothers who owns the Isaac England House and from Harry Lenderman who owns the Elk Forge Bed & Breakfast. The Historic District Commission (HDC) recommended that a 200 to 500 word press release be prepared to submit to the local papers referencing the most recent nominations and the testimonials. This release would be sent once the Bland nominations process reaches its culmination.

Chairperson Folk inquired as to whether a workshop would be an integral component in moving the HDC's business forward. Mr. Dixon indicated that the Cecil County Historical Society will be holding a winter meeting sometime between November 2013 and April 2014. The HDC could have a table at the meeting to use as a platform to publicize itself and its work. Once an exact date is known he will report it to the HDC.

Chairperson Folk indicated that she will be meeting with representatives from Mt. Harmon Plantation next week to discuss the potential nomination of their site for local designation.

Mr. Black indicated that he has scanned aerial photography from the years 1938, 1952, 1957, 1964, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1996, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2010, and 2013. Milt Diggins inquired if it was on the County's website. Mr. Black replied that it was not but that he could copy it to a disk if someone wanted to review the photos.

Audrey Edwards posited that it would be desirable for the County's HDC to become involved inside the municipalities in an effort to improve the efficacy of the Town's efforts to preserve their historic and architectural heritages. The HDC asked Mr. Black to find out if that would be possible.

Chairperson Folk adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

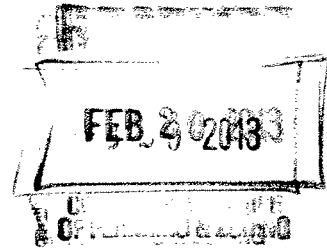
Respectfully submitted:

Eric S. Sennstrom, Director – Planning & Zoning

NEXT MEETING – 3:00 p.m., Tuesday July 2, 2013, Bainbridge Room, County Administration Building

Douglas Bland
19 Port Herman Rd
Chesapeake City, MD 21915
February 17, 2013

Eric S. Sennstrom, AICP, Director
Cecil County Department of Planning and Zoning
Cecil County Administration Building
200 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite 2300
Elkton, MD 21921



Dear Sir:

Attached, for your consideration, is our Nomination Form and supporting documents for Cecil County Register of Historic Places. Specifically, it is in reference to our home of residence, formerly known as Town Point School No. 4, located in the 2nd District, near Port Herman.

Our primary goal with this application is to preserve and protect this building for the future. Quite a few local residents went to school here over the years, and we feel it is a building that has some local historical significance.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Bland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" being more prominent than the last name "Bland".

Doug Bland

Enclosure: Nomination Form and Supporting Documents

CECIL COUNTY REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FORM

Please refer to separate detailed instructions for completing this form.

Definition

"Property" refers to the entire geographic area being nominated. It may be an individual building, site, structure or object; or it may be a district consisting of numerous buildings, sites, structures or objects. An area consisting of several types of structures with different owners is also a property that is a district.

Nomination Information: Please Print or Type

1. Name of property: Town Point School No. 4

2. Address of property: 19 Port Herman Rd, Chesapeake City

3. Tax Map: 47 Parcel Number: 7

For districts on more than one property, list tax map and parcel number of all properties in proposed Historic District.

4. Name, address, and telephone number of all property owners of record within the District:

Debra Lovejoy-Bland, Douglas Bland
19 Port Herman Rd
Chesapeake City, MD 21915
410-885-2886

(Attach separate sheet, if necessary)

5. Description of property boundaries of the District:

At a stone set in the ground on West side of public road leading from
Town Point Rd to Port Herman, the same at N.E. corner of formerly W.S.
Ways Steve House lot, running South $81\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ West 13.1 perches to a stone;
North 17° West 4 perches to a stone; North $61\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ East 10.8 perches to a stone on
West side of said public road; South $28\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$ East 9.8 perches to the beginning

6. Attach a map showing the boundaries and location of the site or District.

7. Please provide photographs or slides showing the important structures or features of the property.

8. Please check all designations that apply to this nomination. Add descriptive information for those checked. Is or has this property in any part been listed or nominated to:

No National Register of Historic Places? _____

No Maryland Register of Historic Properties? _____

No Cecil County Historic Designation? _____

No Maryland or Cecil Inventory of Historic Properties? _____

No A preservation easement by any historic organization? Identify _____

No Are there any other easements or rights of way affecting the District? _____

_____ Other, explain _____

9. Please check all of the following criteria that apply to the property.

A. Historical or Archeological

The property has character, interest, or value as part of the development or cultural characteristics of the county, state or nation.

_____ The property is the site of a significant county, state or national historic event.

_____ The property is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the county, state or nation.

B. Architectural

_____ The property embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction or use of indigenous materials.

_____ The property represents the work of a master builder, designer, architect or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the county, state or nation.

_____ The property embodies elements of design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship that render it architecturally significant.

_____ The property embodies design elements that make it structurally or architecturally innovative.

_____ The property has a unique location or singular physical characteristic that makes it an established or familiar usual feature.

_____ The property has character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, with a high level of integrity or architectural significance.

10. Attach a statement describing the property, its historical significance, and the reasons why it should be designated to the Cecil County Register of Historic Places. Describe in some detail the application of any criteria checked in #9 above. At the end of the statement, please list your sources of information, including bibliographic references.

11. Signatures of owner(s) of record consenting to this nomination. If there are more than two owners, please attach a separate sheet referencing item 11 and provide the information indicated.

A. Print name: Douglas Bland Date: Feb 17, 2013

Signature: *Douglas Bland* Date: Feb 17, 2013

B. Print name: Debra Lorraine Bland Date: Feb 17, 2013

Signature: *Debra Lorraine Bland* Date: Feb 17, 2013

12. Name, address and telephone number of person submitting application:

Name: Doug Bland

Address: 19 Port Herman Rd
Ches City, MD 21915

Telephone Numbers: (Home) 410-885-2886 Hours Available: day
(Work) _____ Hours Available: _____

Date: 2-17-13

Official Use Only

Application Number: _____
Date received: _____
Date of Public Notice: _____
Election District: _____
Zoning District: _____
Land Use District: _____
Tax Map: _____
Parcel(s): _____

HDC Hearing Date: _____
PC Hearing Date: _____
CC Hearing Date: _____

February 14, 2013

Town Point School No. 4 was a one-room frame building standing on the west side of Port Herman Rd, where it branches from Town Point Rd, about three miles from Augustine Herman Highway. This school superseded an earlier one which was in existence when the County system was inaugurated on January 1, 1859.

On land originally granted to Augustine Herman in the 17th century, known as Bohemia Manor, the area became part of a 270 acre plot of land in the mid 1800's. It was divided again in 1852 to an 18 acre land area. A ½ acre lot was conveyed to the School Commissioners for \$50, by deed from Joshua Clayton, dated July 2, 1877.

A few days later, a notice in the July 7, 1877 Cecil Democrat read:

"To Builders

Proposals are solicited for building a frame SCHOOL HOUSE at Port Herman, on land purchased of Colonel Joshua Clayton, and adjoining the store of W.S. Way, Esq.

Building to be 18 by 24 feet, 12 high in the clear, to be similar to the Middle Neck House except the siding, which is to be good German (?), brick chimney, plastered to the floor and then wainscoted to the windows.

To be completed on or before August 28th (1877). Paid for when accepted by the Board of School Commissioners. Proposals solicited with and without desks for scholars. To be opened July 17th at 2 p.m. The right to reject all bids reserved. Any information may be had by calling on George Biddle, School Commissioner, Cecilton, MD. "

On July 17, 1877 a contract was given to Ed and George Jackson to build a school for \$420.

The September 15th, 1877 issue of The Cecil Democrat reported on a recent School Commissioners meeting:

"The board met on Tuesday last, all the members present. Commissioner Biddle reported that he had examined the new school house at Port Herman, and that the work was well done and nearly finished."

Other documents offer the following:

William Henry Purdy, Sr., at age 21, 1877, helped haul lumber to build the Town Point School. (a)

Mary Pyle, Port Herman was born in 1883 and started school in 1889. She has a report card dated March 1894, with her grades at age 11. George Biddle was the School Superintendent, and his daughters Mary and Bertha, were schoolteachers. (a)

The teachers at Town Point included: Lula Brown, Lula Bryson, Ella Cannan (1910), John Cavender (1875), Alice R, Hager (1923), Laura Jones, Arrie McCoy, Gertrude Manlove (1922), Sadie Nichol, Ima Taylor (1914), Mary Walter, and Carrie Wright. (b)

February 14, 2013

In the May 6th 1922 issue of The Cecil Democrat, a notice read:

“The friends of Town Point School are invited to attend a flag-raising at the school on Friday, May 12 (1922). The flag will be presented by the Jr. O.A.U.M. of Chesapeake City. Addresses will be made by State Counselor Satterfield of Chestertown, and ex-Senator Henry M. McCullough of Elkton. Refreshments will be served.”

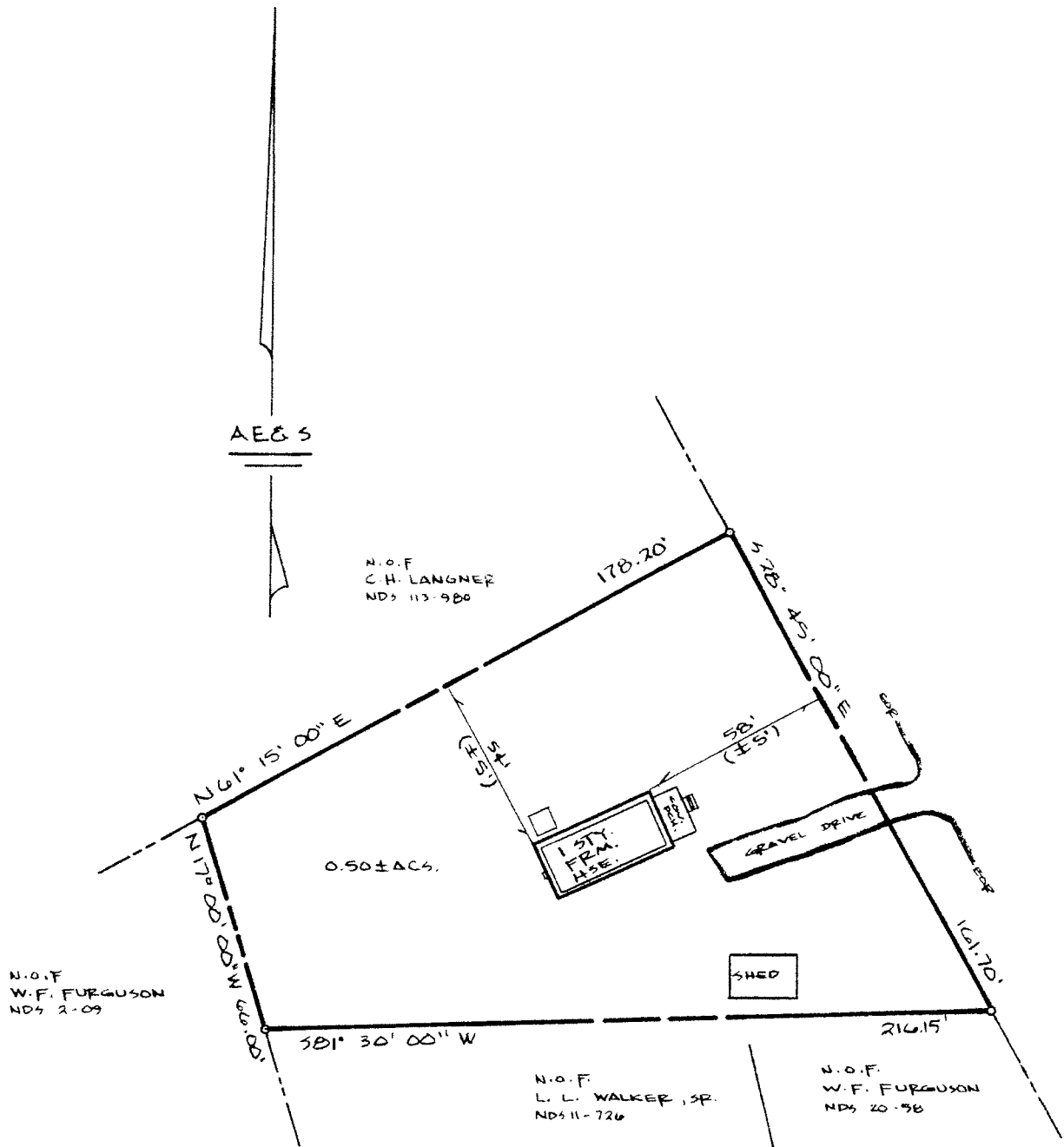
After 61 years of use, Town Point School was closed in 1938, and the building was sold to F.J. Colby for \$166 on June 13, 1938. After a grocery store had been conducted in it by Charles Bailey for several years, it then exchanged hands several times: In 1956 to Louise and Guy Rhoades; in 1956 to Anna Haines Brown; in 1964 to Francis Shunk Brown, III; in 1983 to Charles and Kathryn Langner; in 1995 to Debra and Douglas Bland.

The Schoolhouse still has its original pine clapboards, and double-sash windows. The stone foundation has been repointed and preserved. The interior has been remodeled with respect to its original appearance. In the 1920's, a 270 square foot addition was built on to the west end of the structure. In 2002, another 2-story addition was built onto the west side of the 1920 addition.

This schoolhouse received mention in a Cecil Whig article about the history of Port Herman. In 2000, it was included in a book entitled 'Chesapeake City – Canal Town Through The Years; by Karen T. Morgan and J. Kevin Titter. In 2006, it was featured in a Cecil Soil article by Robert Hazel. These articles are attached.

(a) Research notes of Ernest Howard – Cecil County Historian, 1970

(b) Chesapeake City – Canal Town Through The Years; by Karen T. Morgan and J. Kevin Titter; copyright 2000



IMPROVEMENTS LOCATION DRAWING
 FOR LANDS OF
DEBRA LOVEJOY
 KNOWN AS
 19 PORT HERMAN ROAD
 LOCATED IN

2ND ELECTION DISTRICT — CECIL COUNTY — MARYLAND

American
Engineering & Surveying, Inc.
 P. O. BOX 650
 NORTH EAST, MD. 21901 (410) 398-5000

THIS PLAT DOES NOT ACCURATELY DEPICT THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY LINES, SHALL NOT BE RELIED UPON FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OR LOCATION OF FENCES, BUILDINGS OR ANY FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND IS OF BENEFIT TO THE CONSUMER ONLY INsofar AS IT IS REQUIRED BY THE LENDER OR TITLE INSURANCE COMPANY FOR THE CONTEMPLATED TRANSFER OR RE-FINANCING. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN LOCATED AS SHOWN — PROPERTY CORNERS WERE NOT SET — PROPERTY WAS PLOTTED FROM DEEDS AND PLATS.

[Signature]
 PROF. LAND SURVEYOR

DATE: JULY 13, 1995
 SCALE: 1" = 50'
 DWG. NO.: 5467

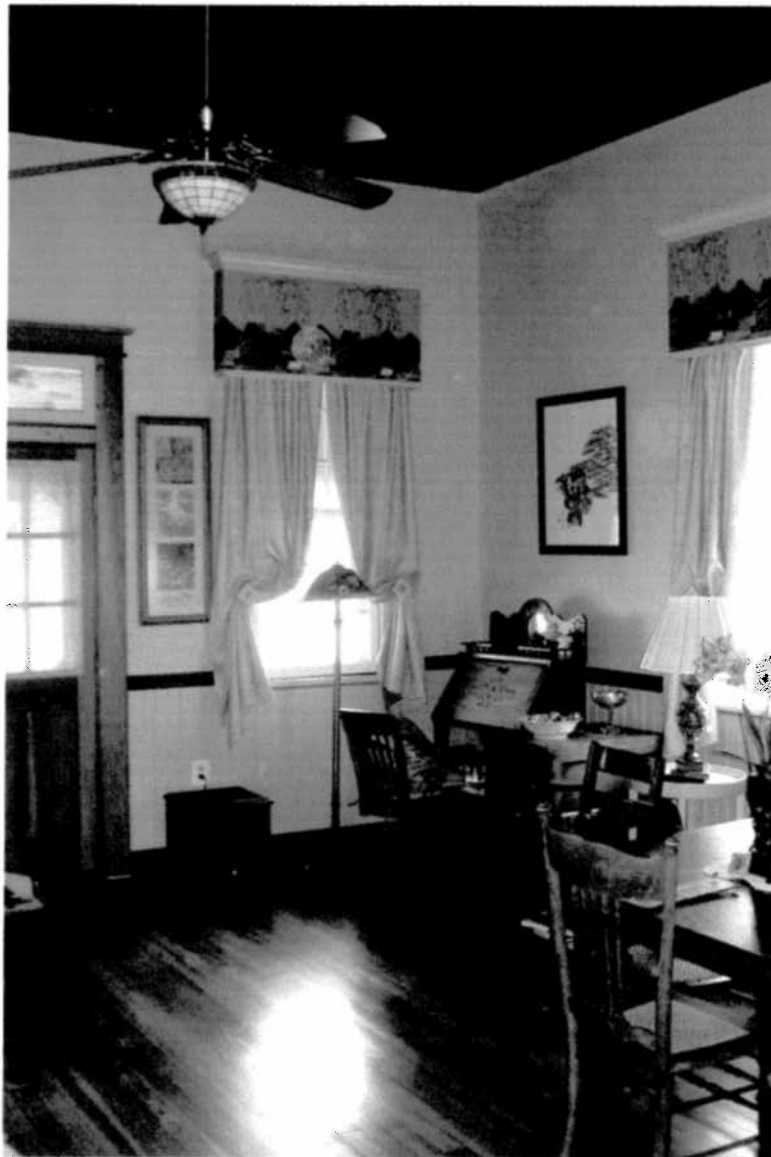


Town Point Public School No. 4
~ 1900



2010







Late August, then, finds us in a rented Chevrolet, the endless pavement of I-80 before us. I tell him only that we are going west, nothing more.

West. Toward Iowa. Toward a patch of land willed into being by 150 years of baseball truths and legends, by an author's eloquent fictions and a Hollywood dream factory's millions. West toward the pastoral, the breadbasket, the realm where clichés aren't cliché yet and the letters s-t-a-d-i-u-m still spell nothing.

With a weathered mitt, a cracked old bat and a scuffed baseball in the trunk, we go

below and knew I was home. But grass grows weeds and people grow up. How unexpected, then, to learn that the diamond carved from the cornfields a decade ago for "Field of Dreams," the movie based on W.P. Kinsella's novel "Shoeless Joe," really existed and had become, as in the film, a place of pilgrimage, a heartland Lourdes of secular spirituality.

"People will come," Kinsella's protagonist is told in the movie. "They'll turn up your driveway, not knowing for sure why they're doing it, and arrive at your door innocent as children, longing for the past."



Dreams. The diamond, located in the middle of cornfields, draws baseball fans from around the nation. Even though it's just a movie prop, it has become a spiritual attraction to sports fans.

In its heyday, Port Herman was a resort village

(See *Baseball* page C8)
 September 14, 1998

By Mike Dixon
Special to the Whig

Back in the early part of the century, Port Herman was the place to be.

The small, waterfront community on the Elk River just a few miles south of Chesapeake City attracted city folk who wanted to get away for a few days.

An entrepreneur from "Germantown" — Philadelphia — Robert H. Thomas, Esq., developed Port Herman. About 1843, he purchased from John Rawlings a large tract of land along the Elk River, land that had once been part of Augustine Herman's vast Bohemia Manor estate.

In short order, the Pennsylvania set out to improve and develop his holding. Streets, such as Cherry, Front and Second, were laid out and land was subdivided into building lots.

The businessman also built a "steam saw mill and plaster mill" in 1851, and he was commencing a large steam-driven cotton factory, the Cecil Whig reported.

Mr. Thomas' apparent interest in steam, and the capabilities provided by his saw mill, must have created an interest in boat construction for in Aug. 1852, the Whig reported that he was "having a steam boat built."

Port Herman's "little steamer," the *John C. Groome*, was built and launched in 1852.

The vessel, needing no wharf because she was only 21 feet wide and had a shallow draft, was designed to run to Elkton, Head of Sassafras, Head of Bohemia, and other narrow tributaries inaccessible to larger steamers.

Working out of Port Herman, the "little steamer" was running upon the waterways at the Head of the Chesapeake when the next sailing season arrived in 1853.

An "auxiliary boat," she commanded with the "Philadelphia" Baltimore boat at Port Herman (The Lady Wilmer), a new boat on the Elk," the Whig reported. "Capt. Benj S. Foulks" commanded her.

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, Mr. Thomas sold building lots to Thon Marshall, James Van Horne steamboat captain), G. Thompson and others. During these years, he also built a number of more boats. (When the executive was settling his estate later in the 1850s, there was one unfinished vessel on his Port Herman property.)

Area farmers' no doubt used Port Herman and its shipping facilities to ship their crops "city markets." There was a wharf, warehouses and a store the 1877 atlas of Cecil County shows.

(See *Port Herman* page C8)

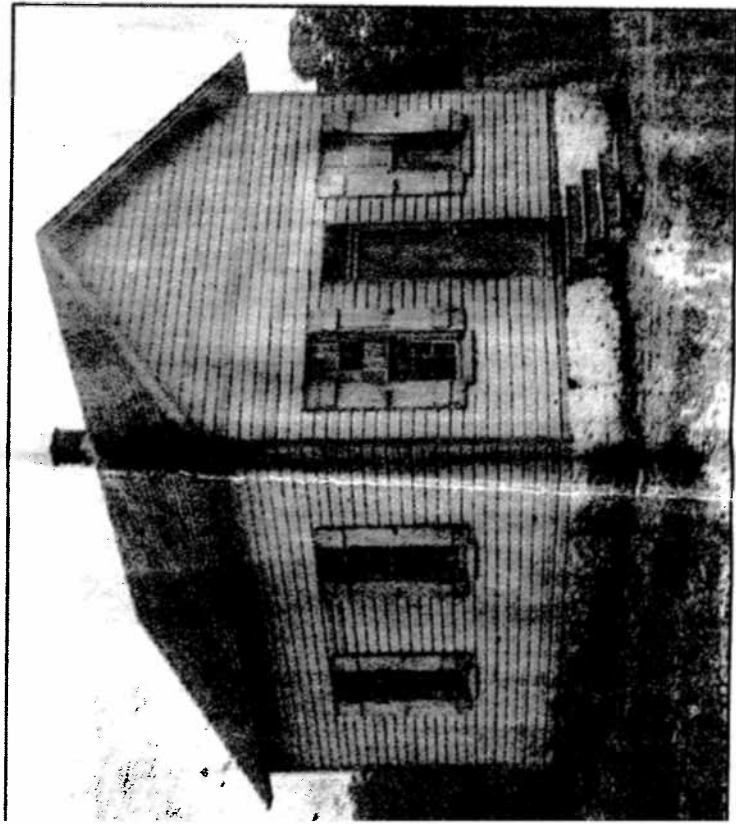


PHOTO COURTESY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CECIL COUNTY
 Town Point school opened in 1877. The building was sold in 1938 for \$166.

(Continued from page C1)

The year the steamboat was launched, 1852, was a time of big happenings in Port Herman. A few months after the launching, the Postmaster General gave villagers a place to post and pick up mail. "Seventy inhabitants and fifty families" living within two miles of Port Herman now had regular mail facilities, the Cecil Democrat reported.

Before that, those 50 families called at Chesapeake City's post office for their mail. Home delivery didn't exist then, so mail was held at the closest post office until it was called for.

Thomas C. Marshall served as the postmaster, according to Postal Service Records. In his first half-year of business, Postmaster Marshall collected \$3.17 and was compensated \$3.28. Somehow, about two months before the pivotal, bloody Civil War battle at Gettysburg, Pa., the federal bureaucracy found time to shutdown Port Herman's little post office (April 1, 1863).

A school, the Town Point school, located where the roads to Town Point and Port Herman separate, opened in 1877 (the school superseded an earlier one started by county school records as being in Port Herman). The school building was sold "for \$166 on April 12, 1938," accord-

ing to Cecil County Maryland Public Schools, 1850-1958.

A "large boarding house" or summer hotel, the Elk River House, opened on in September 1888. Having room for "50 boarders," Thomas Griffin built it for Wm. J. Fears.

Two years after the hotel opened, the Elkton Appeal editorialized that the number of city residents who could afford to spend summer time in the country was increasing. "This is seen in the numbers who have visited the few boarding places that have been open the past summer along our rivers."

Port Herman's hotel capitalized on this growing vacation trend. A July 1919 advertisement said: "Elk River House Now Open — boarding by meal, day or week. Automobile and yachting parties taken care of. WM. FEARS."

The year before World War I was a forward one at Port Herman. Citizens formed the Town Point Improvement Association, which had better roads for the area as its chief goal. Everyone residing in "Town Point Neck" was invited to join.

On the Fourth of July 1916, the Improvement Association held Port Herman's "first celebration" on the "banks of the Elk River, surrounding the hotel." Celebration-goers were favored with the finest weather and "several hundred visitors in automobile and boat" attended.

It was a great day in the village. There was a parade, a patriotic speech and songs, and refreshments, in the morning. After lunch, boat and tub races and a ball game were featured. Illuminations, fireworks, and a phonograph concert in the evening, finished off a perfect day.

of wind and rain, ground was broken for the "new Town Point M. E. Church," in February 1916. By September, folks were invited to take part in "the most important event in the history of the village, the laying of a corner stone of the new Methodist Church. Previously, the church had met in a building that was either a vinegar mill or a blacksmith shop, old postcards indicate.

As the church neared completion, the Cecil County News said the bell tower was in place but there was no bell. This was a good chance for "some kind friend, with a bell, to be long remembered."

That year, just before the "Great War," they weren't going to miss a holiday. On Labor Day the American Mechanics raised a flag and conducted a patriotic program at the school, which had "been enlarged to accommodate the increasing population of the area." After the celebration everyone "marched over to the church at Port Herman" where a lawn party was held.

Today, the Elk River House is owned by Francena Johnson who recalls hearing older residents talk about the summer hotel. "The Ericsson steamer would bring vacationers down from Philadelphia each Saturday during the summer and the hotel would send its wagon down to the wharf to pick up the guests."

After World War II, Mrs. Johnson recalled that Bob Fears had a public beach along the shore. To accommodate guests he built a concession stand, a bathhouse and summer cottages. The cottages were rented for the season, she recalls.

A unique part of Cecil County's history is preserved in the little riverside community of

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Rainbow Six
by Tom Clancy
On Sale Here!
**CHARING
CROSS BOOKS**
Shoppes of Londonshire,
32 S. Main St., North East, MD

Book entitled 'Chesapeake City - The Canal Town Through The Years'
by Karen T. Morgan and J. Kevin Titter, copyright 2000

One-Room Schoolhouses

TOWN POINT SCHOOL, No. 4

The school was built in 1859 on Port Herman Road by the Jackson Bros. for \$420. It occupied a lot bought from Joshua Clayton for \$50.

Each child had his own agate drinking cup, and each morning, one of the children would fetch a bucket of water from a spring across

the road. When it snowed, the children in this school had the privilege of sledding down Pepper Hill during their recess time.

In 1923, the trustees were Howard Pyle, William Fears, and Clarence Broadwater.

Since the school closed, the building has been converted to a private residence.



Photo courtesy of Debbie Lovejoy



Town Point School as a single room frame building in 1900 (left); and today, a completely restored cottage home overlooking Port Herman and the Elk River.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1931 Miss Katie G. Loveless, teacher of the primary grade in Chesapeake City school, wrote the play entitled "Mother Goose's Party," and sold the publication rights to a Baltimore publishing company.



WHEN THEY BROUGHT THE SCHOOLS TO THE KIDS— Memories of Three One-Room Schoolhouses

—By Robert Hazel

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century many one-room schoolhouses dotted the Cecil County countryside. Residents and former residents of the Chesapeake City area have clear memories of attending these unique institutions. In this article, former students recall their experiences in the schools located at Town Point, Chesapeake City, and Earleville.

The Town Point School

Bill Briscoe: "My brother, Frank, and I attended the one-room schoolhouse in Town Point through the seventh grade. We had one teacher and she taught all seven grades. When I was in the fourth and fifth grades, I had arithmetic, history, and geography three times a week, and when I was in the sixth and seventh grades we helped the teacher grade papers from the other kids. The teacher was **Gertrude Manlove**, and she had thirty or forty kids.

"In the room was a big, pot-bellied stove with a pipe running all the way to the other end. When we got older we had to carry the coal in from the coal house. We got our water from a farm across the road from us. There was a fenced-off spring and we took a bucket down and dipped up the water every time we needed it. Everybody drank out of the same dipper. At that time, the road to Port Herman was dirt; it never was paved while I lived down there."

Dorsey Johnson: "I went to the one-room schoolhouse in Town Point. As far as I know I was the only one in the seventh grade. That was in 1937 and I remember when we had the graduation exercise at the Presbyterian Church in Chesapeake. I had to get up there by myself and say a little piece. I have all of my report cards,



Dorsey Johnson in his old seat in the remodeled schoolhouse at Town Point

Town Point one-room schoolhouse, circa 1925
—courtesy of Dorsey Johnson



which are all signed by Miss Manlove. She was a good teacher. The kids had a lot of respect for her.

"The building is still standing. It's a nice-looking modern residence now. The owners, Doug and Debbie, let me inside for a visit recently. When I attended, if you walked in the front door the aisle was right down the middle, with the desks in rows on each side. At the back was a water cooler in the corner and the stove which was on a platform. I recall stepping up on it. Miss Manlove had her desk there, also. The blackboard was on the back wall with a mirror above it so that when Miss Manlove was standing there writing, she could see if anybody was misbehaving without turning around."

"I remember the day **Irving Griffith** jumped out the window. It was the spring of the year and he wanted to go outside, but Miss Manlove said, "No!" When she went back to lock the door, Irving leaped through the open window. Well, when he got out there he realized he had made a mistake, but he wasn't tall enough to climb back in. But after that he didn't go out any more windows because she stopped in and told his parents. They were strict; I know that.

"When I went to school there, the road to Port Herman was cobblestone. I recall walking across it many times to carry back pails of water from the spring to fill the water cooler. That old spring is still there in the field. After the seventh grade, I went to the Chesapeake City High School. The bus

driver was Clifford Whiteoak, and I recall how he always wore a suit of clothes when he drove the bus. The school at that time had a bell tower. Sometimes students would be allowed to pull the rope to ring the bell."

Ruth Ginn: "I lived in Town Point as a child, and I remember attending the one-room schoolhouse there. When it snowed, Miss Manlove stayed at our house. She lived in Cecilton and didn't want to make the trip in the snow. She was a big lady as I recall. She would get up the next morning, eat her breakfast, make her bed, and take off."

I remember some of the other students also, especially Irving Griffith, who was in the seventh grade. He was one of the oldest and was really an ornery guy. I was sitting in class when he pulled the hot poker out of the stove and chased Miss Manlove all around the schoolroom with it. She didn't do a thing to him to make him do that. I think she was half afraid of him. But she really did run around that room. (continued on page 48)



Gertrude Manlove, respected teacher of the Town Point School, 1930
—courtesy of Ruth Ginn

One-Room Schoolhouses ... continued from pg 15

And he finally put it down. Sometimes, when the girls went to the outhouse, he'd go out there and knock on the door and act silly."

Gertrude Eveland: "My brother and I went to the one-room schoolhouse at Town Point. His name is **Robert Johnston**, but everybody calls him 'Snake.' I'll tell you how he got that nickname. Miss Manlove couldn't get her car started one afternoon after school. So Bobby said, 'Let me look! Maybe I can find what's wrong.' Then he said, all innocent like, 'Oh, Miss Manlove, there's a snake in there wrapped around your coil.' Well, he had put that snake in there to be ornery. So, from then on everybody called him 'Snake.' But the teacher never found out.

"Now, I know that Miss Manlove did a great job of teaching. She taught the First Grade to the Seventh. We were all in groups and everything went very well. I remember some of my school-mates: **Ruth Ginn, Virginia Purdy, Frankie Ulary, May Briscoe, Fred Rothers, Dorsey Johnson, the McConney girls, the Griffin boys, and all the Whitlocks.** The really ornery one was Lewis Whitlock. We were scared to death of him."

Robert "Snake" Johnston: "Sure, I went to the Town Point one-room schoolhouse. I went there with a kid named **Murray, Billy and Ruth Purdy, Bill Purner, Ruthy Broadwater, the Mindosas, Charley Bailey, the Sheldons, and the Bakeovens.** There were four of us **Johnstons: Daisy, Arthur, Gertrude,** and myself. They closed the school down when I was in the Sixth Grade; then they bussed us to Chesapeake Elementary. I remember when Murray tried to knock the foundation out from underneath the Town Point School one time. He used a sledgehammer on it. You can still see the damage to the wall if you go look at it. It's on the side facing the river. He did a pretty good job on it."

"Another thing I recall is that we had a coal stove in the middle of the room. Well, one day Murray threw a bullet into it and busted it. It was quite an explosion—scared all of us. But we kept right on using it. Murray didn't go to school there long, but he didn't want to go at all; that's why he did those ornery things."

The Chesapeake City Colored School

Lois Maria Sewell: "This building that I live in was once a one-room Colored schoolhouse. They closed it in 1942. I was here in the first grade and I remember it well. The older kids were on one side and we were on the other. I remember that **Miss Emma Boyer** had a long stick to correct the kids. The blackboard was towards the back and Miss Boyer had a cowbell that she rang when recess was over.

"This house is partitioned now, but when it was a school house it was one big room. This building has the original boards

The Chesapeake City one-room Colored schoolhouse as renovated in 2006



Elkton. The bus would pick us up and take us across the lift bridge. Then we would stop on the North Side to pick up the kids who lived over there.

"I still remember most of the teachers at Carver: **Miss Lang, Miss Long, Miss Jones, and Mr. Bessick.** We had very good teachers. **Mr. Charles W. Caldwell** was our principal. When I was in high school I transferred to Dunbar High in Washington, DC. I graduated from there in 1950."



Miss Alverda Ferguson and student stand in front of the Fingerboard School, circa 1917—courtesy of miriam Burris


The Fingerboard School—Earleville

Miriam Burris: "I attended the Fingerboard one-room schoolhouse from 1929 until 1936. I remember it well. I remember warming my hands on the pot-belly stove. We had extreme winters then, and I recall walking to school over snow drifts and never breaking through. Sometimes we went in a horse-drawn sleigh or carriage. The pump was outside, so water was carried in a bucket with a dipper. Of course, there was no indoor plumbing, so we used outhouses and, boy, were they cold in the winter."

"I remember how we used to bring our sleds to school and, after eating a quick lunch, we bundled up and took our sleds across the field as far away as we could. Our teacher, **Miss Ferguson**, had a large hand bell and she used to ring it at 12:50. Of course, we could never hear it! So she would bundle up and come across the field to get us. Several times, as I recall, we pulled her back to the schoolhouse on a sled. She was a wonderful teacher, and I daresay we learned more than the basics: how to get along with others and how to have compassion for others, which she taught by example." 🐾

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