



Worcester County Historical Society News

Spring 2022

Save the Date!

The Worcester County Historical Society will hold its annual spring dinner meeting at the Pocomoke Community Center on Market Street, Friday, May 6. Dinner guests will learn about Worcester County's past from Dr. Ray Thompson, retired history professor at Salisbury University while enjoying a delicious meal of chicken and dumplings with all the fixings prepared by the Ladies Auxiliary.

Dr. Thompson will speak to the members and guests about the early history of Worcester County. Dr. Thompson said that the Eastern Shore has been fortunate to have the oldest continuous records in British-speaking America starting in 1632 to help people understand who the earliest settlers were. He called them hearty men and women who lived in the frontier environment away from civilization. His talk will look into who they were and their lifestyles and how they transformed the Eastern Shore. He will trace the movements of the settlers up the peninsula of Virginia into Maryland's Eastern Shore and into Delaware. Their economic, political, cultural, and religious societies led to the fundamentals of America today. He also plans a power point to supplement his discussion.

Dr. Thompson, along with Sylvia Bradley, was the co-founder of the Edward H. Nabb Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at Salisbury University in 1983. His 45 year career at the university included teaching history and serving as chair of the history department. Today he continues speaking and doing research in local history.

Doors will open for the event at 5:00 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per person and can be purchased by sending a check to Robert Fisher, WCHS Treasurer, 230 South Washington St., Snow Hill, MD 21863. The deadline for reservations for the dinner, which is open to the public, is April 29.



Museums of Worcester County

- Calvin B. Taylor House Museum
- Costen House Museum
- Delmarva Discovery Center
- Furnace Town Living Heritage Village / Mt. Zion School
- Girdletree Barnes Bank
- Julia A. Purnell Museum
- Ocean City Lifesaving Station Museum
- Queponco Railway Station
- Rackliffe House
- St. Martin's Church Museum

Sturgis One Room Schoolhouse/Heritage Hous

Other Historic Sites in Worcester County

Germantown School Community Heritage Center

10223 Trappe Rd

PO Box 24

Berlin, MD 21811

410-641-0638

Marva Theatre Performing Arts Center

103 Market St.

Pocomoke City, MD 21851 410-957-4230

Please visit the museums and historic sites in our county.

Spring General Meeting WCHS

Pocomoke City Fire House

May 6, 2022

5:00PM Social/6:00PM Dinner

To: Bob Fisher

230 South Washington St.

Snow Hill, MD 21863

Please find my check for ____persons x \$25.00 for dinner at the Pocomoke City Fire House for the Spring general meeting of the Worcester County Historical Society . Please make checks to Worcester County Historical Society (WCHS). **Deadline April 30, 2022.**

PLEASE be considerate and send in your reservation early! !

Name _____ Phone # _____

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you there. If you have a credit with us from cancelled past meetings, consider your meal paid for. If you have a question about this contact Bob at 410-632-1635.



Worcester County Historical Society

PO Box 111

Snow Hill, Maryland 21863

2022 Membership

(Dues period January 1-December 31, 2022)

Thank you for choosing to be a member of the Worcester County Historical Society.

Your membership will help support our efforts in Worcester County. You might also wish to volunteer at one of our county's 12 museums or WCHS at a time that is suitable for you.

Renewal _____

New Member _____

| TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP | ANNUAL DUES | AMOUNT ENCLOSED |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Individual</i> | <i>\$10.00/year</i> | _____ |
| <i>Family</i> | <i>\$15.00/year</i> | _____ |
| <i>Business/Patron</i> | <i>\$25/year or \$100/5years</i> | _____ |
| LIFETIME | \$150.00 (ONE TIME) | _____ |
| <i>Donation (501C-3 deductible)</i> | | _____ |

NAME _____

Mailing address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone Home _____ Office _____

Email address please _____

Check here if you wish to only receive electronic newsletter (newsletter will not be mailed) _____

Your membership is welcome, Dues period January 1 through December 31, 2022

Please make your check payable to the Worcester County Historical Society (WCHS) and mail to:

Treasurer, WCHS

Mr. Robert A. Fisher

230 South Washington St.

Snow Hill, MD 21863

The Gristmill in Worcester County by Bob Jones

We do not know how the earliest citizens of Snow Hill got their flour for bread. Most likely, it was thanks to the primitive mortar and pestle. I am speaking of the era 1685-1750. Eventually, it was **Purnell Mill**, founded about 1750, that made flour from the grain brought in by local farmers. Three miles west of Snow Hill, on Corker's Creek, there was a second gristmill known as **Bennett's Mill**, which operated until 1892, when it closed down due to a hurricane wash-out. I have found no documentation as to its date of construction.

Early mills were almost always built and supported by farming communities, and the miller received the *"miller's toll"* in lieu of wages, often 1/8th of the grain or flour. Gristmills historically could handle a wide range of grains, including wheat, corn, and rye. Once the grain had been ground into flour, the miller would take a cut of the proceeds, allowing the farmer to take the rest; some farmers chose to sell their flour through the miller, allowing him a percentage of the take in exchange for handling the transaction. **Early communities, like Snow Hill and Berlin, were dependent on their local mill, bread being a staple part of the diet.** Berlin's nearest gristmill was at Trappe.

The gristmill was also used as a site for exchanging news. In the winter, its millpond was sometimes used for **skating** and for **harvesting ice**. It played an important role in colonial life and on up till 1900, even 1935.

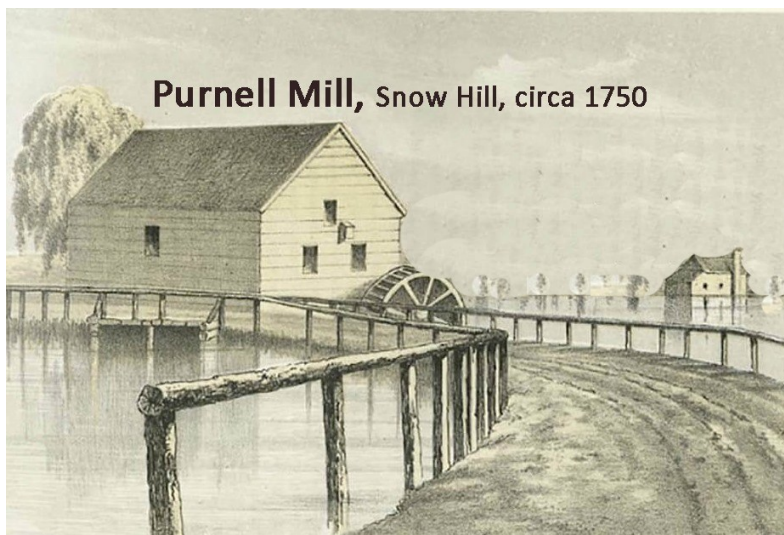
- **From Local Snow Hill Newspaper, 1888:** It is very seldom that it is cold enough in this section to reach six inches of ice, but such was the case the first part of this week. **Ice measuring 6½ inches** was cut on Purnell's Pond last Wednesday. Ice houses are now pretty well filled, and, with the best ice we have seen cut in this section for a number of years, we hope it will be cheap enough next summer for even the poor printer [setting the type for this newspaper] to be able to cool his parched lips occasionally. [*Democratic Messenger*, Snow Hill, Feb. 4, 1888, p. 3]

From Pocomoke: Our young folks have been having some very fine skating for the past week, and they all seem to enjoy it hugely notwithstanding the severe, cold weather. One thing, however, I notice that the girls left all the work, such as putting on skates, etc., to the boys, and, on those bitter cold days, we wished so much they would think of its being Leap Year and put our skates on for us. [*Democratic Messenger*, Snow Hill, Feb. 4, 1888, p. 3]

Reginald Truitt's book **Worcester County: Maryland's Arcadia** documents some 33 gristmills in our County, plus a small number of wind-driven mills. Classical mill designs were usually water-powered, though Worcester had some mills powered by the wind. In Europe, in 1850, the total number of wind-powered mills is estimated to have been around 200,000 at the peak, whereas water-powered mills numbered some 500,000. There as here, windmills were used in regions where there was too little water or the land too flat to allow sufficient flow of water.

A few **Dutch-style windmills** were constructed in Worcester County early in its history. One was supposedly located on the Jesse Holland farm near Showell, which is likely the one Group Member, Barry Mariner wrote me about (his farm is located on *"Windmill Creek"*). Another such mill was located near Windmill Point off Harmon Landing Road. And a third one on Windmill Hill opposite Dutch Point near the entrance of Box Iron Creek. We can infer that there was a Dutch-like windmill on the Old Seaside Road off Rowley Cove at Taylor Landing, near Girdletree. Arthur Rowley, in his 1818 will directs that ... *my Dutch fan [fan mill] stays on this place I now live on for the use of Sam Rowley and Benjamin Rowley and Jesse Bennett* [his sons and son-in-law]. The Dutch windmill that is best documented was on Sinepuxent Neck and owned by Joshua Carey (1831-1907). See photo, to the right.

In our chronicles of Worcester County, we recently encountered at the **Purnell Millpond** the tragedy whereby **William E. Timmons**, after foiling a thief who attempted to rob his turkey coop *coming through the rye*, ended his own life by drowning, his body weighted down with railroad iron.



From our President

There once was a time when as a group we shared two seasonal, open meetings per year. They were usually supported by special presenters coupled with a traditional feast with all the trimmings. These gatherings were thoroughly enjoyed and have been solely missed.

A fine time indeed!

Boldly speaking, and cross your fingers for that time has arrived again. As you scramble for your pens and calendars, please mark this date down: Friday May 6th, from 5:00 PM till 8:00 PM with dinner being served approximately at 6:00 PM. The Meeting Hall in Pocomoke City's Fire House, known for the Ladies Auxiliary's tasty preparations, will be our host. Historian Ray Thompson plans to be our guest speaker.

During this meeting, I'll be giving you an update on possible projects in the near future. I will be introducing the membership to two new board of directors and pleading the assemblage for any volunteers who may wish to join our board. Also if you have any projects that are dear to you, please pass them on to us.

Looking forward to meeting you.

Thank you,

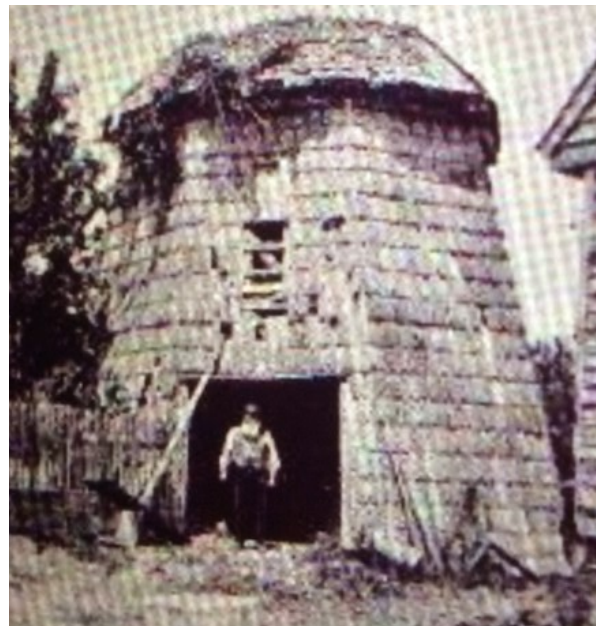
Newt Weaver

Help wanted:

Worcester County Historical Society is in need of volunteers to serve on the board. Please contact our President Newt Weaver if you would be willing to serve. We need YOU! No experience necessary!

Continued from previous page:

A second millpond tragedy occurred near my hometown of Stockton, at Rowley's Mill on Pike's Creek. The story is told by Reginald Truitt, who recorded it as narrated by Mrs. Betty Chapman of Salisbury; "*About 1864, my Uncle Zedock Robinson accompanied by his young son drove a yoke of oxen to Rowley's Mill for grinding corn. The day was extremely hot, and the steers, suffering from heat and thirst, bolted into the deepest place in the mill hole. Of course, the oxen, driven without reins, could not be stopped, they couldn't or didn't turn, and went right in over their heads, and Uncle Zed, Cousin Lev, cart, grain, and the team were lost. It was a sad time in the community.*"



Joshua Carey Sinepaupt Neck Windmill. Circa 1900



70th Anniversary OCHS State Championship Basketball Team

On March 22, 1952, the Vikings beat New Windsor High School (Carroll County) by a score of 70-55 in College Park to win the Class C Boys' championship. The day before Ocean City defeated Barton High of Alleghany County by a score of 70-60 in the semi-finals. The Ocean City team finished the regular season with a 16-2 record, and ended up 20-2 overall (I think!). Ocean City reached the finals in 1948 and 1951, but were defeated in those games. More information is available at newspapers.com Salisbury Daily Times March 15, 1952.

Pictures of this team are available in Bunk Mann's Book Vanishing Ocean City on page 75 and also on the wall at City Hall in Ocean City. Great place to visit and view all the old pictures. Ray Shockley was a member of this team. Anyone else still living?

Worcester County Historical Society
Mabel Rogers
11238 Adkins Rd.
Berlin, MD 21811
Editor
Submit articles or information to:
thimbly@comcast.net

Please check your mailing label!

Is your address correct?

Is your membership about to expire?

**Please send dues to: B. Fisher 230 S. Wshington
St. Snow Hill, MD 21863**

**If you have an email PLEASE share so the
newsletter can be sent electronically!**

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