



Helensha Cottage



Brick Ruins of Main Campus Building

THE OLD BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT



"Canaan"- the Dromgoole House



Ebenezer Academy Memorial Park

2020

The newsletter for supporters of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation

Dromgoole House

*GIVEN SPECIAL RECOGNITION
BY THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*

On October 31, 2020 the Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist voted to designate one of three properties belonging to the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, "Canaan," the House of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. as an United Methodist Historic Site.

The history of Methodism in the United States dates back to the mid-18th century with the ministries of early Methodist preachers such as Robert Strawbridge who has been credited with establishing the Methodist movement in America. Following the American Revolution most of the Anglican clergy who had been in America went back to England. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, sent Thomas Coke to America where he and Francis Asbury founded the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was to later establish itself as the largest denomination in America during the 19th century.

While celebrating our historical sites as tactile examples of the overall interwoven history of the development of religion and education in American, the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation showcases our historical buildings and sites as being among those that "shaped" Methodism and Methodist over those early colonial years.

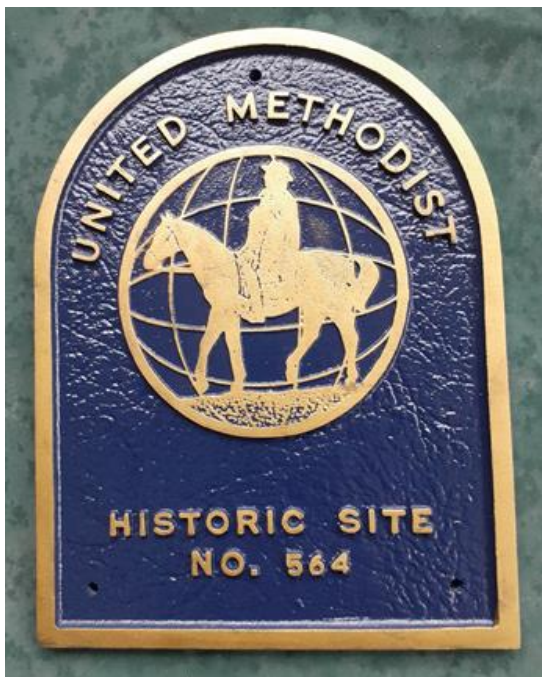
Toward this end, OBCF board member Rev. Dr. Arthur Dicken Thomas, Jr. is spearheading the process to have our historical sites be designated as United Methodist Historic Sites. If deemed worthy, TOBCF also hopes to nominate these sites for the even more prestigious yet more difficult to obtain designation of United Methodist Heritage Landmarks sites.



Dr. Art Thomas visits the room in the Dromgoole House where 18th Century Methodists met for class meetings & public worship.

A United Methodist Historic Site is a location or structure associated with an event, development, or personality deemed of strong historic significance in the history of one of the jurisdictional levels of the United Methodist Church and requires that they be designated by formal action of the jurisdiction within whose region the site is located.

The Edward Dromgoole House has been globally designated as United Methodist Historic Site No. 564 and will be one of only nine sites in Virginia on this honorary list. The other Virginia sites include the Old Stone Church site in Leesburg; Monumental United Methodist Church in Portsmouth; William Watters' Grave in McLean; Page's Meeting House near Radford; the Keyword Marker near Glade Spring; Madame Russell Memorial United Methodist Church and Property in Saltville; and the Pisgah United Methodist Church in Tazewell.



Our United Methodist Historic Site plaque—ready for a future on-site installation ceremony.

The effort to designate a Historic Site is not a casual one. The case for historicity, maintenance, and use must be well established. The Methodist's General Commission on Archives and History counsels that the designation be bestowed sparingly, after careful investigation and research.



Interior of the Dromgoole House showing architectural features such as the mantel and brick "nogging" in the walls.

Dr. Art Thomas was inspired to take on this task by a tour of the Dromgoole House given by Tom King. He was provided references and help by OBCF's board members Carol Corker, Ann Keeling, and Jim Mott; the editor of *HERITAGE* (the bulletin of Virginia United Methodist history), Myra Lindsey; and the archivist at the Library of Virginia, William Bynum. This allowed Dr. Thomas to complete the required research and gather and submit the required documentation.



Dromgoole House before it was wrapped in Tyvex—a white weather resistant plastic to prevent further deterioration.

Watch for the upcoming posting of "Canaan" on the Register of United Methodist Historic Sites viewable at www.gcah.org. The following resolution which was written and submitted as part of the nomination process details the significance of Edward Dromgoole Sr. and "Canaan" to the history of the Methodist Church.

Resolution:

NAMING THE EDWARD DROMGOOLE HOUSE A UNITED METHODIST HISTORIC SITE

Whereas, it is believed that “Canaan” (built from 1796 to 1798), Valentines, Brunswick County, Virginia, the home of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. and Rebecca Walton Dromgoole, his wife, is the only extant home within the bounds of the Virginia Conference now standing that once belonged to an important eighteenth-century Methodist circuit rider and local pastor where also Methodist class meetings, preaching, and worship services took place; and

Whereas, Edward Dromgoole, Sr. (1751-1835) is widely recognized as a significant figure in colonial American Methodism who immigrated from Ireland to Baltimore, Maryland in 1770 with a letter of introduction to a fellow Irishman, Robert Strawbridge, the founder of American Methodism, heard Strawbridge preach in 1770, requested that Strawbridge come to Frederick to preach that “I might hear and be saved, started himself to preach in 1772, received an appointment in 1775 with George Shadford during the First Great Awakening in Virginia (1772-1777) to minister on the Brunswick Circuit in Southside Virginia and North Carolina along with Devereux Jarratt, the noted Anglican preacher from nearby Dinwiddie County who assisted in the spread of Methodist revival among those in the Church of England; and

Whereas Edward Dromgoole, Sr. is widely recognized as a Methodist leader during the American Revolution, since he was one of five selected to supervise Methodism should all British missionaries depart, he kept the rapidly-growing Methodist movement together during this war at a time when mostly all British-born Methodist itinerants had left the country or stopped preaching, he took the oath of allegiance to the American cause in Sussex County, Virginia, he read aloud a copy of the Declaration of Independence to a congregation in Halifax County, North Carolina, he worked with Francis Asbury’s negotiating party during the ordination and sacraments controversy during the Revolutionary War when members were deprived of Anglican clergy for their sacraments; and

Whereas, Edward Dromgoole, Sr. is recognized for his assistance in forming the Methodist Episcopal Church as an American denomination separate from the Anglican Church by writing John Wesley on May 22, 1783 showing that Methodism in America had made decided progress in spite of the war and telling him of the great esteem that the American Methodists had for Francis Asbury and their desire for him “to superintend the whole work, and go through all the circuits once a year” by attending the Christmas Conference held in Baltimore in 1784 where the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized and Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury were made general superintendents, later called bishops; and by offering leadership and hospitality at the Second Conference of Methodism at Mason-Tillet House/Mason Chapel in 1785; and

Whereas since Edward Dromgoole, Sr., who had been influenced by the anti-slavery teaching of John Wesley and the ruling at the Christmas Conference of 1785 that Methodists should free their enslaved people, Dromgoole became convinced of the injustice of slavery and consequently executed in 1791 a deed for the gradual emancipation of his eleven slaves which he carried out, then bought land in the free state of Ohio to settle (as he wrote in 1805) “ because he wanted to move to a state where none of the human race are in captivity,” but in the end he stayed in Virginia due to the ill health of his wife and other concerns, died in 1835, and bequeathed to his heirs 16 slaves that he had acquired in later years to assist him on his plantation; and

Whereas Edward Dromgoole, Sr. served effectively as a travelling preacher during the days of the First Great Awakening and the commencement of the Second Great Awakening during which he wrote “Rich and Poor, Young and Old, Black and White, shared largely of this Divine Visitation”; and

Whereas, Edward Dromgoole, Sr. helped establish in 1784, along with Bishop Francis Asbury and the Rev. Peter Pelham, the Ebenezer Academy, the first Methodist school in Virginia and possibly in America and forerunner of Randolph-Macon College in Boydton, and served as a trustee of Ebenezer Academy which remained under Methodist control until 1800 and which continued until 1846; and

Whereas Edward Dromgoole, Sr. felt compelled to abandon itinerancy following the death of two of his children so he could spend more time raising his remaining family and, consequently, located in 1786 as a local pastor who farmed his plantation called “Sligo”, lived in another home that no longer stands, and, according to dendrochronology, built the present home “Canaan” between 1796 and 1798 from whence he traveled to preach the gospel when needed on the Brunswick Circuit from 1786 to 1835 and also ran a store, operated a sawmill, and served as a magistrate of the Brunswick County Court for 45 years; and

Whereas Edward and Rebecca Dromgoole offered housing and hospitality to Methodist preachers in their previous home and at “Canaan” such as Richard Whatcoat, Jesse Lee, Nicholas Snethen, Peter Pelham, and John Easter, made their home a regular stopping and preaching place for Bishop Francis Asbury on his travels throughout the United States, nursed Asbury back to health in 1798; and

Whereas Bishop Francis Asbury ordained Edward Dromgoole, Sr. as an elder and his sons Edward Dromgoole, Jr. and Thomas Dromgoole as deacons at Dromgoole’s Chapel on his last trip to “Canaan” on February 12, 1815 and preached at “Canaan;” and

Whereas “Canaan,” was also the home of their son George Coke Dromgoole, who served six terms in the United States House of Representatives, and is also the burial place of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. and his family; and

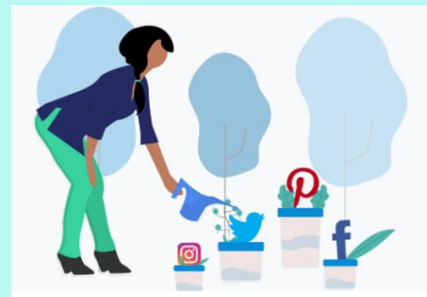
Whereas, the extensive Dromgoole Collections at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Library of Virginia containing the papers of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. and his children form an important source of information for scholars of early Methodism, political life, and plantation life; and

Whereas the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation exists to restore and preserve the home of Edward and Rebecca Dromgoole and needs to establish its historic significance for those providing grants for this historic

preservation of the last vestige of the early American Methodist Episcopal heritage of the Virginia Conference;

Be it resolved that the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church at its session on October 31, 2020 petitions the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church to designate “Canaan,” the home of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. as a United Methodist Historic Site and to submit the completed application form “Registration of a United Methodist Historic Site” to the said General Commission on Archives and History with the signature of the bishop and conference secretary.

The resolution was approved by the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation, the Virginia Conference Historical Society, and the Virginia Conference Commission on Archives and History and signed by our bishop, conference secretary, and president of the Virginia Conference Historical Society.



OUR SOCIAL MEDIA SITES NURTURED AFTER SETBACKS IN 2019

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation’s website and Facebook pages suffered an unexpected cyber crash in 2019 but have been fully recovered in 2020. With the “can-do” tech skills of our vice president, Chad Rhodes, and help from Carol Corker, our Facebook has been revived, Pay Pal connection re-established, and given a “Face-lift”. (Excuse the pun!) You can see our new look and make your donations at:

<https://www.facebook.com/OBCFVA>.

Our website has been taken under the wing and domain name of the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. This change makes our website more sustainable and more cost effective. Thanks to the professional skills of Brenda Capen, Virginia Conference Webmaster/Database Manager, our website has been given additional “polish”. Enjoy our display of historical information, photos and videos now found at:

<https://vaumc.org/oldbrunswickcircuit/>

Women of the Boydton Institute Receive National Coverage

In 2020 the United States commemorated the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote, providing an important opportunity to celebrate the place of women in American history. While history, of course, is complicated, and voting rights for many women continued to be denied because of discriminatory practices, the National Trust for Historic Preservation wanted to tell the full history—to uncover and uplift women across the centuries whose vision, passion, and determination have shaped the country we are today. Accordingly they started a “Where Women Made History” campaign with the initial goal of discovering 1,000 places connected to women’s history, and elevate their stories for everyone to learn and celebrate.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation accepted the following photo and descriptive paragraph submitted by the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation which were then featured on their website for national viewing.



Clara Belle Hatch “argues her case” at the Boydton Institute.

*Photo courtesy of the Joseph Reed Hoffman Photographs Collection
from the University of Michigan’s William L. Clements Library*

On the edge of the small town of Boydton, Virginia is a brick structure described as “one of Virginia’s most dramatic ruins”. This edifice served as the main campus building for two very different educational institutions: the original Randolph-Macon College & the Boydton Institute. Precipitated by the Civil War, Randolph-Macon College relocated to Ashland, Virginia around 1869. Ten years later, its abandoned campus became a school for African Americans called the Boydton Institute. Open until the late 1930’s, this institute educated influential black leaders such as Rev. Vernon Johns--Father of the Civil Rights Movement. This was only possible through the dedication of women of both

... races who worked there. Clara B. Hatch, Helen B. Sharpe, Mary B. Mullen Hench, Ruth M. Graham, Sadie Moore, Anita B. Fitts, Lillian Halstead, Mattie M. Banks, Sarah Bonta & Evelyn E. Holt were among the women who provided the education crucial in African American’s early struggle for racial advancement.”

Check this featured site out along with hundreds of other stories of accomplished women and places where they have made history at:

<https://savingplaces.org/where-women-made-history#.X9oam9hKjIU>

The featured photograph to the left was dated 1891. Miss Clara Belle Hatch’s presence at the Boydton Institute lasted well over forty years as evidenced by, among other things, the following advertisement which was placed in the *South Hill Enterprise* on November 1, 1934.

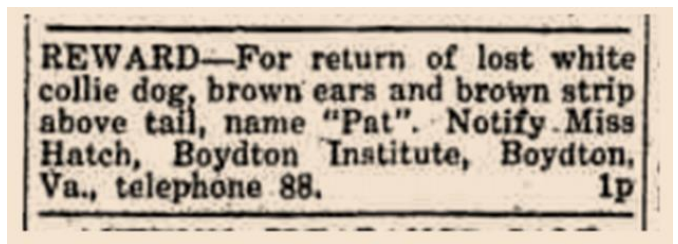


Photo courtesy of historian & researcher, Carol Corker

Clearly Miss Hatch loved her dog and for a lifetime, she remained extremely dedicated to the Boydton Institute and its work.

Anticipation Builds

AS WE WAIT ON RESULTS OF GRANT APPLICATION

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) announced that in 2020 they had been awarded \$4.7 million from the National Park Service (NPS) to help historic properties recover from damage inflicted by hurricane Florence and/or hurricane Michael.

These hurricanes had struck Virginia in September and October of 2018. Properties in fifty- two Virginia cities and counties which were negatively impacted the most by these hurricanes were considered eligible to apply as sub-grantees for this grant. This Included Mecklenburg and Brunswick Counties.

This grant was administered in phases and was financed from a fund source known as the Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPPF). Of the types of project covered under this grant, two types had the most potential of benefiting preservation efforts at two of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation’s historical properties.

First, the grant covered the planning for or work done to stabilize and/or repair hurricane damaged historic properties. This included reimbursement for work already done to repair hurricane damaged properties or resources.

After noticing a dramatic and recent tilt in the east chimney of the Dromgoole house in the summer of 2019, the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation was successful at securing it in its leaning position. This work was done to prevent this chimney from collapsing further and taking the whole house down with it. Additionally we noticed that the west chimney was showing new signs of critical stress and that the foundation needed additional reinforcement work in order to provide the support needed for the chimneys. Based on this we decided to initiate what turned out to be a four month long grant application process.

While hurricane Michael was not the sole source of the tilting of the east chimney, we posited in the application that it was “the straw that broke the camel’s back” in a series of similar environmentally conditions that weakened the already vulnerable chimneys and foundation. After providing photographic and time-dated evidence, this premise was accepted as valid. Based on this premise, we were allowed to apply for a significant sum of money from the grant --not only to cover the cost we incurred to secure the east chimney-- but more crucially, to cover the planning and work needed to stabilize, straighten, and repair both chimneys and the stone foundation of the Dromgoole House.

Secondly, this grant covered projects to obtain architectural and archeological surveys and inventories of historic sites to determine their grant eligibility, the degree of damage and to prepare for future disasters.

Previously, Lisa Jordan and Carol Corker of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation had submitted the necessary documentation to the VDHR such that both our Dromgoole property and our Randolph Macon College & Boydton Institute Complex had been successfully categorized as “eligible” to receive the designation of a Historic District, Virginia Historic Landmark, and/or a National Historic Site. Nevertheless, final formal surveys and documentation were still needed to finalize this nomination process. As part of our grant application we requested architectural and planning services, which among other things, would help us make this happen.

Long-standing board member, Mrs. Carol Corker provided the bulk of the research and documentation needed to complete the nomination process for the Dromgoole House. However, as a result of this grant the VDHR will

potentially have the funds needed to add the final technical and professional touches required.

As part of the feasibility study for widening highway 58 near Boydton in 1991, the Department of Transportation (D.O.T.) completed a phase I & II Cultural Resource Survey. This survey evaluated the historical value of the properties along the Rt. 58 corridor including the land containing the original Randolph Macon College and the Boydton Institute. Their survey verified and documented the historical significance of this campus and recommended having it established as a Historic District. As part of phase II of this grant, we applied for funds for the professional help we need to update and augment the D.O.T. survey so that the Randolph Macon College & Boydton Institute Campus and associated historic properties can be designated as a Historic District.

Historic Districts, Virginia Historic Landmark sites, and National Historic sites are honorary designations that validate the historic status of structures and sites. This designation makes the sites more eligible for future grants as well as legitimizing its worthiness for private donations. Obtaining this designation for our historic properties will put the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation in an optimal position to further its preservation goals.

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources accepted both phases of our grant application and has passed our application on to the National Park Services for their review. We have received encouragement throughout the application process and now are anxiously awaiting final announcement from the National Park Services confirming the names of the final recipients of the grant awards.

Thanks to everyone who helped with this grant application. If the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation succeeds at being named among the grant recipients, there will be a whirlwind of work for us all as we partner with the VDHR to complete the preservation work. The project must be completed in two years-- so keep your well wishes and support coming!



Preservation Continues

AT THE BOYDTON INSTITUTE'S HELENSHA COTTAGE

Flashing back to 2018, we reflect on all the help that we received by partnering with a program named YouthBuild under the Pathways Organization.

YouthBuild is a youth leadership development and career readiness program. It focuses on leadership development, educational completion, vocational training and mentoring for youth in Petersburg, VA and the surrounding areas. These youths, who are disconnected from school and/or work, range in age from 17-24.



With the help of the industrious group of young workers from YouthBuild pictured above, our preservation work at the Boydton Institute's Helensha Cottage had gotten off to a booming start as they cleared out all the rubbish, and deteriorating floor covering from the interior and cut out rotten floor boards from the kitchen space.



BEFORE



AFTER

Work continued at the end of 2019. The roof of the "modern" brick garage extension had completely collapsed and the badly deteriorated extension was holding moisture against the wooden frame of the original house. All of this extension was demolished bringing the house closer to its original footprint.



BEFORE



In 2020, the piles of removed brick, broken up concrete and wood were removed from the site followed by heavy duty clean-up of the grounds.



AFTER

Tidy and ready for our next step!

OUR SPEAKERS:

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation garners much encouragement from the subject matter experts that volunteer to be speakers for us at various gatherings. It motivates us, educates us and the public about the history and significance of our sites, and generates much needed financial and "in kind" support and enthusiasm.

Due to a combination of bad weather and scheduling conflicts, the 2019 annual meeting of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation was combined with the meeting of the Virginia Conference Methodist Historical Meeting. Held in February of 2020, we were appreciative of the flexibility of our speakers, Dr. Art Thomas, Mr. Robert "Bobby" Spiers, and Mrs. Betty Ann Spiers, as we rearranged locations. Their presentations were enjoyed by all and captured for all to see here in the following photos.



Dr. Art Thomas presents "Introduction to Devereux Jarratt & His Leadership in the First Great Awakening on the Old Brunswick Circuit.



Bobby Spiers discusses the significant role Devereux Jarratt played in the development of Methodism in Virginia.



Mrs. Betty Ann Rex Spiers explains her husband's family link to Devereux Jarratt.

PRESENTATION: *RAISES INTEREST & DONATIONS*

After diligently researching the topic, in November 2020 Dr. Art Thomas delivered a scholarly, virtual presentation to the Adult Sunday School classes at both the Reveille and Trinity United Methodist Church in Richmond, Virginia. The topic was *Edward Dromgoole (1752-1835), Methodist Preacher in Brunswick County, Virginia: His Struggle to Free His Slaves*

Recently United Methodists have struggled over the issue of lingering white racism. Dr. Thomas' PowerPoint talk allowed attendees to examine John Wesley's progressive views on race and emancipation of enslaved laborers. In 1791 Dromgoole freed his enslaved people, bought land to move to Ohio where he could live in a territory that did not permit slaveholding. Nevertheless, he later accommodated himself to gradual emancipation whereby he acquired slaves to farm his Virginia plantation while still hoping for the end of slavery at some future time.

Dr. Thomas concluded his presentation by describing the work being done by the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation to restore the home of Edward Dromgoole-- the last surviving eighteenth-century home of a Methodist Episcopal minister. Thanks to the Reveille Sunday School members for giving so generously to our restoration efforts after hearing Art's talk!

If you are interested in having this 50 minute talk given to your church or community group, either by Zoom currently, or in person after the coronavirus pandemic is over, please contact Art Thomas at:

Arthurdthomas333@gmail.com

PUBLIC INVITED:

SPEAKER AT MAY 2021 ZOOM MEETING

William Bynum, archivist at the Library of Virginia, will be opening the Saturday May 15, 2021 Zoom meeting of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation by speaking on Edward Dromgoole, Sr. All who wish an electronic Zoom invitation to the talk, including the required computer link, can contact Mr. Jim Mott at jhmottva38@hotmail.com.

Bill Bynum is the son of a United Methodist minister in the South Carolina Conference. Born in Darlington, S.C., he grew up in Cheraw, Chesterfield, and Charleston. He holds a BA in history from Wofford College and an MA in history from the University of Virginia, with a concentration in early America. He served for many years as research historian and acting director of the former Presbyterian Historical Society office in Montreat, N.C. Since 2007 he has been a reference archivist at the Library of Virginia, where he has contributed articles to the ongoing Dictionary of Virginia Biography including an article on Edward Dromgoole, Sr. Bill and his wife, Michele, live in Midlothian, Virginia.

WELCOMED:

NEW BOARD MEMBER

The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation is happy to announce the arrival of a new member on our board, Patricia Ellis Archer.

Pat Archer was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. She earned a B.A. in liberal arts at Mary Washington College and a M.A. in Education with a major in Tourism Studies at George Washington University.

She moved to the Washington metro area and worked as a tourism professional for over twenty five years, including as marketing manager for the Fairfax County Convention and Visitors Bureau and as an adjunct faculty member at the Northern Virginia Community College and George Washington University. In addition she found time to serve on the Arts Commission in Fairfax City.

On retirement, Pat moved back to Richmond and became manager of Preservation Virginia's John Marshall House, where for five years she researched the life of John Marshall, lectured on his life and work, and planned their 250th Birthday Celebration. She has lectured extensively on John Marshall and taught courses at the Shepherd's Center of Richmond, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

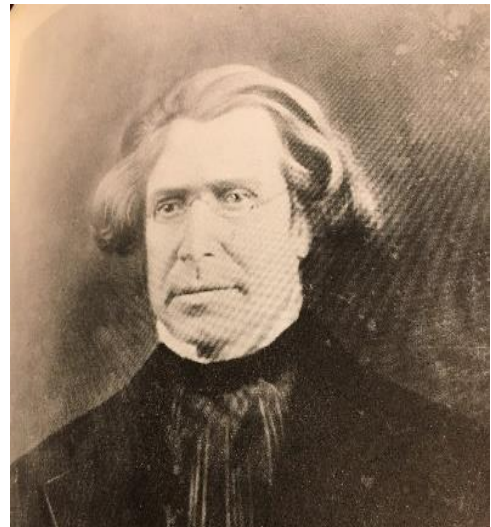
She was a certified tour guide for the City of Richmond and worked part time as a travel Counselor for the Richmond Visitor Center and as a tour guide at the Virginia State Capitol. She has volunteered as a docent at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and as a tour guide at St. Pauls' Episcopal Church on Grace Street.

Pat has two grown daughters and four grandchildren, and enjoys genealogy, and traveling. She has traveled to Morocco, Brazil, Russia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation looks forward to getting to know Pat better and to putting her many talents to work. Pat – we welcome you with open arms!

EDWARD DROMGOOLE, SR.:

WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

No portrait of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. has yet been located. Walter Beales is a director and secretary of the OBCF and the great, great, great, great grandson of Edward Dromgoole, Sr. Walter brought our attention to a photograph of Edward Dromgoole's son, George Coke Dromgoole, in *Brunswick County, Virginia 1720-1925* written by Gay Neale. Shown below, this photo is also available in the public domain. We could speculate that



Edward, Sr. may have looked somewhat like his son. Teasing our imagination, Bruce Cotton gave the following brief description of the esteemed Methodist minister, Edward Dromgoole in a 1935 book he wrote for his family, *As We Were: A Personal Sketch of Family Life*. He wrote, "He also wore a wig, rouged his lips, wrote poetry and took snuff, which proves that he was a gentleman as well as a preacher". Anyone knowing of a portrait, illustration, or a fuller description of Edward Dromgoole Sr. is asked to please contact Art Thomas at arthurdthomas333@gmail.com.

PHOTO SPOTLIGHT

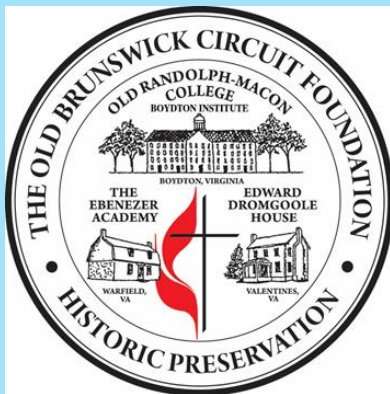


“A picture is worth a thousand words”.

This picture captures the quiet reverence we have for our historic sites and the passionate and loving work that goes into preserving them.

This photo was taken by Sarah Moseley while Tom King finished pouring concrete into the base of the east chimney of the Dromgoole House to unify and give it stability. Tom had left an opening in the outside of the east chimney in which to pour the concrete but there was a collapse in some of the interior chimney bricks which blocked that entryway. He had to finish by carrying the concrete in through the house in buckets. Thanks to a driver with whom Tom had decades of work history, they were able to back the chute into the front porch door. No other driver would have

accommodated this and Tom’s back was saved by not having to carry buckets of concrete up the steps. Thanks to Tom, Sarah and the very helpful driver.



The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (TOBCF) is a 501(3)c tax-exempt non-profit organization formed in 2004.

While seeking to preserve and interpret key historical sites along the 18th and 19th century Methodist Brunswick Circuit, it shares its legacy of faith, history, and education with the public.

TOBCF emphasizes this diverse local heritage by using these sites as learning laboratories and cultural facilities for education and social interaction.

TOBCF strives to research, preserve, and develop historical interpretation of these three properties:

Ebenezer Academy Memorial Park—site of the first Methodist school in America;

Canaan—the Dromgoole House --the home of an early Methodist circuit rider, the Rev. Edward Dromgoole, and later home of his son an early 19th century U.S. Congressman;

The original campus of Randolph-Macon College in Boydton, VA -- the oldest Methodist-related college in continuous operation in the United States. After the college relocated to Ashland, the campus was opened in 1879 as **the Boydton Institute**, an impactful school for African Americans.