

# THE Cradle 2022

*Annual e-Newsletter for Friends of The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation*

## 2022--A FOUNDATIONAL YEAR OF PRESERVATION

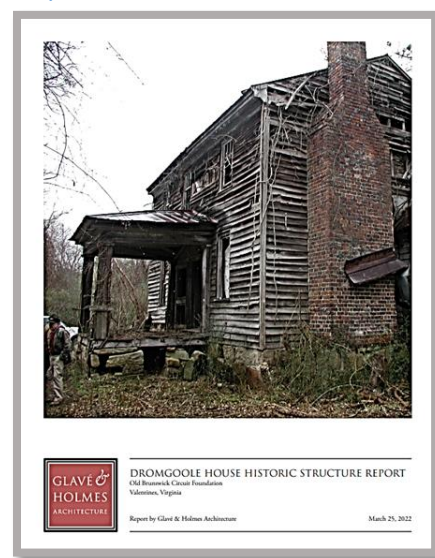
In 2022 The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation (TOBCF) focused their preservation efforts on the foundation and chimneys of two of their historic buildings; the Dromgoole House in Brunswick County and the Helensha Cottage in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

In 2021 TOBCF was awarded a two-part grant that we have come to refer to simply as the "Hurricane Grant". This grant was funded in part by the Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPF). It is administered by the National Park Services Department of Interior in partnership with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

The Dromgoole House was the home of an early American itinerant minister. Under this grant in 2021 TOBCF succeeded in having this home listed on both the Virginia and National Historic Registers. This year, funds from this same grant allowed TOBCF to contract with the architectural firm, Glave & Holmes, to develop a combined Historic Structure Report and Engineering Assessment. This report has now been completed. It includes definitive documentation of the history of the Dromgoole House, a comprehensive description of its fabric at the start of this project, an overview of material

deficiencies involving safety and structural stability, and a list of proposed interventions. This planning document meets the requirements of the VDHR's rehabilitation standards and grant requirements. Additionally it informs the work to be done in the next step of the work funded by the Hurricane grant; namely the stabilization of the foundation and chimneys of this historic building. The full Historic Structure Report is available for all to view and downloaded at:

<https://doc.vaumc.org/HistoricalSociety/DromgooleHouseHSRFINAL.pdf>.



*Cover of the Historic Structure Report for the Dromgoole site*



## UPLIFTING HISTORY AT THE HELENSHA COTTAGE

The Helensha Cottage was the home of Helen Bradford Sharpe, the longstanding headmistress of the Boydton



*Helensha Cottage*

Institute. This institution was an influential school for African Americans that opened on the original Boydton campus of Randolph Macon College about ten years after that college relocated to Ashland. For sixty years it operated as a mecca of education for people of color.

Thanks to a generous donor, this year TOBCF had the funds it needed to contract with two different companies: Expert House Movers of Virginia Beach and Dale M. Wilson, General Contractor of Chase City, VA. These two contractors worked together to rebuild the foundation of this historic building. As a result, the Helensha Cottage has been lifted off of its original foundation, new concrete footings poured, new cinder block support pillars and foundation rebuilt underneath and deteriorating wooden underpinnings replaced. The house has been lowered back onto this new, stable foundation which has now been veneered in brick.

This and future rehabilitation of the Helensha Cottage facilitated by TOBCF will occur through repairs, alterations and additions in ways that will still preserve or convey its historical, cultural and architectural values.

TOBCF's long range goal is to rehabilitate the Helensha Cottage as part of their on-going mission to conserve and interpret significant sites or landmarks of pioneering educational and religious institutions in Virginia. Interpretation will celebrate the staff and students that worked and studied there from the 1830s through the 1930s while illustrating significant moments in history that occurred during this time.

The following snapshots chronicle this "foundational" preservation work for all to see. TOBCF is relieved to see the Helensha Cottage sitting on its stable new foundation and looks forward to working with the community to continue its historic renovation.



*Boxwood and other shrubs removed*



*Boxwood saved & replanted on west property line*



*Excavating dirt from underneath the cottage*



*Metal beams being placed underneath*



## GRANT FUNDS NOMINATION OF BOYDTON CAMPUS AS HISTORIC DISTRICT



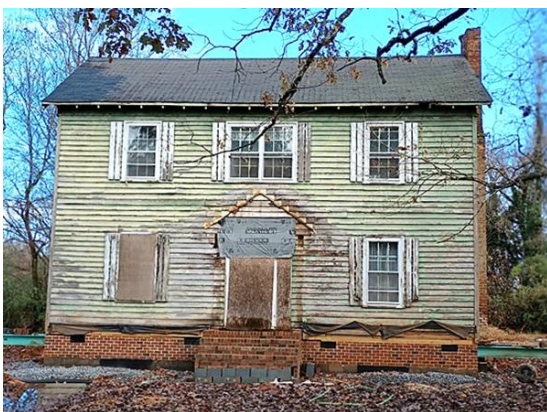
*Front View--Cottage lifted off its original foundation*



*Aerial back view--Cottage raised off its original Foundation (Photo courtesy of Ken Currin)*



*Concrete footing poured & new foundation built*



*New cinder block foundation now veneered in brick*

In a second phase of the “Hurricane” grant, TOBCF was awarded funds to be used to further document and authenticate the history of a piece of property on the outskirts of the town of Boydton in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. For about forty years this property was the original campus of the Randolph Macon College and for sixty years afterwards it was the campus of the Boydton Institute.

This second phase of the grant provided the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) the necessary finances to contract for and manage (1) a Historic Resource Survey and (2) a National Register of Historic Place nomination in order to have this campus designated as an historic district. Subsequently the VDHR contracted with an environmental consultant corporation, Environmental Research Group (ERG), to complete this process. This year the VDHR hosted a project start-up meeting with representatives from TOBCF, ERG and the town of Boydton and notified property owners of the survey and nomination process. In November ERG’s Architectural History Program Manager, Anna Maas, and their Architectural Historian, Becky Yousef, visited Boydton for three days of fieldwork. They took photographs and made notes on all buildings and structures on those properties identified as previously being part of the Randolph Macon College and/or the Boydton Institute campus. To augment research already done, they visited local archives and repositories in search of additional supportive historical information.

The goal is to have the required nomination documentation ready for the VDHR to present to the State Review Board at least by their quarterly meeting in the summer of 2023. If successful, TOBCF will soon have two of its three historic properties listed on the Virginia Historic Landmark Register and on the National Register of Historic Places.

More information about The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation and our three historic sites can be found at:

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

To support the preservation efforts of this foundation, tax-deductible donations payable to The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation may be sent to P.O. Box 385, Lawrenceville, Virginia 23868-0385 or payments can be made via PayPal on The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation’s Facebook page at: <https://www.Facebook.com/OBCFVA/> .

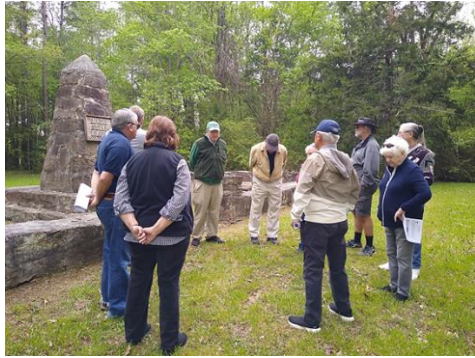


## SPRING HISTORY CARAVAN

On April 30, 2022 a caravan of cars formed at the Warfield Post office in preparation for a full day of touring of the three historical sites owned and under preservation by The Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation.

The goals of the tour were to get new board members familiar with and excited about these historically rich sites. Having seen each other only by virtual meetings through the Covid pandemic, it also gave both new and longstanding board members a fresh opportunity to get re-acquainted.

The first stop on the tour was at 14680 Boydton Plank Road in Warfield, Virginia. The group, pictured below, gathered by the monument at the Ebenezer Academy Memorial Park and discussed the legacy of this place.



Next the caravan headed to South Hill where everyone continued congenial conversations over lunch at the 313 *Franklin Cocktails and Kitchen*, a restaurant artistically set up in a former elementary school cafeteria.

With full stomachs, next the tour members continued on to 170 Jefferson Street in Boydton, Virginia. Once there, board members Walter Beales and Ann Keeling gave short summaries of the history of the Randolph Macon College and the Boydton Institute campus and participants looked over the two historic buildings located on this property.



*Tour group at the raised Helensha Cottage*



*Tour group -- ruins of the Randolph Macon College & Boydton Institute main campus building in the distance*

Tom King issued an invitation to the group to take a side trip to Henrico, NC to the location of the Tucker Plantation. This is where the famous duel between Daniel Duggar and George C. Dromgoole, son of Rev. Edward Dromgoole, Sr. took place. While there, King gave everyone some historical highlights of the Dromgoole family and house. Spirits not dampened by the light sprinkling of rain (excuse the pun), the caravan headed off for the last stop of the tour: Canaan, the plantation home of the Rev. Edward Dromgoole, Sr.



*Tour group inside the Dromgoole House*

Eighteen people participated in the tour--including board members and other folks-- all with a shared interest in local, Methodist and American history. Everyone left tired at the end of a full day of touring but invigorated by what they had seen and heard.

TOBCF hopes to develop similar driving tours in the future, hopefully to be offered to even larger and an even more diverse range of audiences.

## Learning from the Wake Forest Historical Museum

Randolph Macon College (RMC) shares some very similar elements of its history with that of Wake Forest University. TOBCF reached out this year to learn some best practices from them on their successes at preserving their history.

Like RMC, which was founded and chartered in the 1830's, Wake Forest University's history dates back to 1834, when Wake Forest Manual Labor Institute was founded in Wake Forest, North Carolina. It was re-chartered as Wake Forest College in 1838, making it one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in North Carolina. With a similar claim to fame, RMC has the honor of being the oldest continuously operating Methodist College in America based on its date of charter.

In 1946, the Wake Forest College accepted an invitation from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to move their campus 100 miles west to Winston-Salem, NC. Construction began in 1952 and the new campus opened its doors in 1956 on land of the R.J. Reynold's estate. This land had been donated to the college by the Reynolds family for this purpose. Likewise in 1869 the RMC trustees made the decision of relocating RMC 115 miles from Boydton to Ashland VA.

Wake Forest College was designated Wake Forest University in 1967. However after all of its changes through the years this college never forgot its original roots in Wake Forest, NC. Honoring its legacy it opened up and manages the Wake Forest University Museum located on the grounds of its original campus.



In June, four of TOBCF board members; Walter Beales, Marc Thompson, Ann Keeling and Jim Mott, made a day trip to the Wake Forest University Historical Museum to get pointers and lessons learned on accomplishing such a task from the Director of this museum, Ed Morris, and Sarah Soleim, Manager of Community Academic Learning (both shown above). These museum staff members were exceedingly helpful and the discussion

covered more information than can be covered here. Highlights included their advice to develop a well-developed professional business plan and to identify and reach out to the widest network of stakeholders possible. For them this included but definitely was not limited to alumnae, the Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, NC, local businesses, the local town governments, banks, board members and students from the college. They stressed the importance of interactions with as many groups of people as possible--involving and engaging them in activities beneficial to them and to the museum. Their ultimate goal was to build bonds between the museum and their stakeholders and to strengthen on-going funding streams.

The day ended with a tour of the museum and adjacent Calvin Jones House. Built about 1820, this house was owned by Dr. Calvin Jones and was the first building constructed on the original campus of the Wake Forest College. The house was eventually acquired by the Garden Club, moved to its current location and restored by the Wake Forest Birthplace Society. It is now a house museum also operated by the Wake Forest Historical Museum.

For a virtual tour of the Calvin Jones House you can go to: <https://wakeforestmuseum.org/2020/05/14/virtual-tours/>



*The Calvin Jones House*

Although the Calvin Jones House Museum is much older than the Helensha Cottage, it provides one example of how the Helensha Cottage might be incorporated into TOBCF's future curatorial plans for our Boydton site.



*One of the exhibits in the Wake Forest University Museum*



## Odoriferous Visitor

One morning in April, Carol Corker, a prior board member and continued supporter of TOBCF, went to the Dromgoole House to drop off a collage of photos of TOBCF's sites. She realized that something was moving upstairs. First she thought it was a bird or snake but it sounded bigger and moved across the floor like an animal. She guessed it might be a raccoon. It sounded large and loud enough that she didn't venture beyond the front rooms downstairs. In addition to the noise she also smelled a very noticeable unpleasant odor.

Later Tom King, another of our hardworking supporters, checked on the house but found no animal inside and the bad smell apparently had dissipated. However, much to his surprise he found two very large eggs on the bare floor in the corner of one of the upstairs rooms. Pam, his wife, found matching photos of the eggs on line and it turned out that they were Vulture eggs.



*Vulture eggs taken from the Dromgoole House  
(Photo courtesy of Tom & Pam King)*

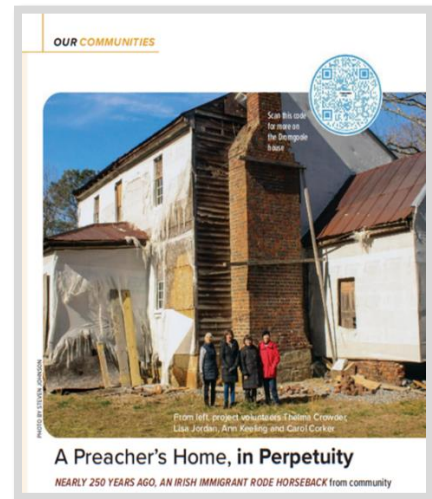
It seems there are two types of Vultures common in Virginia: Black Vultures and Turkey Vultures. Neither build nests but lay eggs on the ground and both have been known to lay their eggs in the protection of abandoned buildings. Vultures are incredibly important to the environment because they eat dead animals that most other predators can't stomach. Eliminating the rotting meat helps stop the spread of tuberculosis, rabies, and more! Regardless, we prefer that this smelly visitor not return to the Dromgoole house and Tom moved the eggs outside.

## "A Preacher's Home, into Perpetuity"

Publicity for TOBCF came in many forms this year. The Dromgoole House was featured in the March issue of *The Cooperative Living Magazine*, a publication of the Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives. This article is available to read in full at: <https://www.qgdigitalpublishing.com/publication/?m=30133&i=738691&p=1&ver=html5>

Steve Johnson is a photographer and journalist for the *Cooperative Living Magazine*. His photograph showing four of TOBCF board members standing in front of the

Dromgoole house gives the readers a true sense of its size.



Steve is shown below with board member Thelma Crowder. Thanks to Thelma, who was on the board when the decisions were made to purchase the Dromgoole House, we could provide Steve with valuable information about the early work of our foundation.



*Steve Johnson getting information from Thelma Crowder  
(Photo courtesy of Lisa Jordan)*

## Original RM Campus Student Inspires Visit: RMC Connection Cited at Dedication

The founder of Alpha Tau Omega (ATO) Fraternity, Otis Allen Glazebrook, a student at the original Randolph-Macon College campus, inspired a September visit to Boydton by active ATO member Judge H. Pope Hamrick of Ormond Beach, FL. Judge Hamrick and other ATOs along with Glazebrook biographer, Dr. Thomas Jones of Macon, GA, erected a memorial at Christ Episcopal Church in Macon which had been pastored by Glazebrook. Former Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, also an ATO, cited the R-MC connection in his remarks at the memorial dedication. Glazebrook later pastored the Episcopal church attended by Princeton University President, Woodrow Wilson. While U. S. president, Wilson appointed Glazebrook as a special envoy to the Vatican. For more information about Otis A. Glazebrook see: <https://ato.org/home/story-of-our-founding/>.

## Awareness Generated Through Research, Lecture & Art

In the fall 2022 issue of *HERITAGE*, one of TOBCF's board members, Arthur Dicken Thomas, Jr., Ph.D. presented a study of Edward Dromgoole, one of the earliest Virginia Methodist preachers, as he tried to live by John Wesley's antislavery ethic. Dromgoole, an Irishman who converted to Methodism, came to America in 1770. Under Robert Strawbridge's encouragement, he began to preach in 1772, and was admitted on trial to the Methodist ministry in 1774. He stayed faithful to the American cause during the Revolutionary War and was chosen to help lead the Methodist movement as the British preachers had to depart or stop preaching. Dromgoole married and lived in Brunswick County, Virginia, where he held class meetings and worship services in his home (currently under preservation by TOBCF) and at the Dromgoole Chapel. Dromgoole also accumulated over 1100 acres of land – plus slaves to farm the land. So, how did Edward Dromgoole rationalize both his slave ownership and his partial emancipation of his slaves while trying to live out John Wesley's antislavery ethic?



*Dr. Arthur Dicken Thomas, Jr.  
-- teaches at Wesley Seminary  
about Methodist antislavery  
activities.*

Dr. Thomas presented and explored this ethical dilemma at the September Annual Meeting of the William Watters Foundation. For those who missed his lecture, access to this and other scholarly works is available with a very affordable subscription to the *HERITAGE*. The *HERITAGE* bulletin is published biannually by the Commission on Archives and History of the Virginia Conference of The United Methodist Church. For more

information see <https://vaumc.org/heritage/>. To subscribe or to get a copy of this issue contact The Rev. Linda Crabbs at [SubscribeHeritage@vaumc.org](mailto:SubscribeHeritage@vaumc.org).

As an enhancement to his article, Thomas sought out the help of a neighbor and artist, Emma Lou Martin. Commissioned by TOBCF, Martin created a conceptualized portrait of Rev. Edward Dromgoole to include with Thomas' article. The portrait is based on a Thomas Sully portrait painted by Thomas Sully of Edward Dromgoole's son, George Coke Dromgoole.

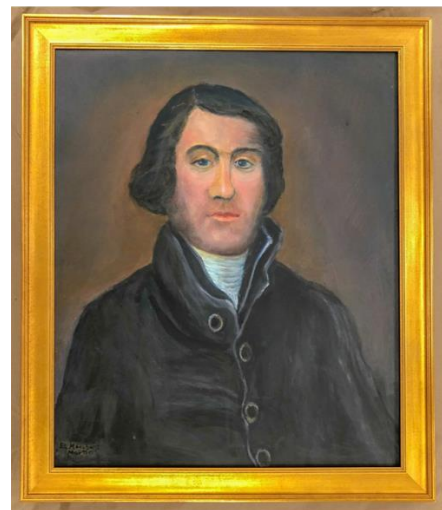
Emma Lou Martin is an award winning mixed and multimedia artist in Richmond, VA. After two years of study at Randolph College in Lynchburg, she earned a

Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from William and Mary. She was a docent at the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk for 10 years and is an emeritus docent after 26 years' service at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.



*Artist, Emma Lou Merchant Martin.  
(Photo courtesy of Art Thomas)*

She was the founding director of the successful artist co-op, Uptown Gallery in Richmond. She is a signature member of the Virginia Watercolor Society, a founding member of the new Virginia Collage Society and Virginia Pastel Society as well as past president of the Metropolitan Richmond Artist Association.



*Conceptualized portrait of Edward Dromgoole, Sr.  
(Photo courtesy of Bob Coles,)*

The finished portrait, seen in the photo above, is currently being shown in an exhibition at Westminster Canterbury Richmond. Afterwards, TOBCF is working with the St. Paul's Museum to have it stored and/or displayed on the second floor of the Brunswick County Conference Center. Eventually the board wants it placed in Canaan, the Edward Dromgoole, Sr. House in Valentines, Virginia. However, it will be a number of years before the restoration and furnishing of the house are completed.

## Notes on our Board Members & Supporters

We are happy to announce some new board members have joined our Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation: Catherine Abernathy, Dianne Daniel and Marc Thompson.

**Cathy Abernathy** is a native of Brunswick County. She and her family live on Lake Gaston. Cathy and her husband own A & A Accounting firm with offices in Lawrenceville, South Hill and Emporia. She is treasurer of the Rock United Methodist Church, a member of DAR and is treasurer of the Brunswick Museum and Historical Society.

**Marc Thompson** is retired after 28 years in the United States Air Force as an air intelligence officer with assignments to the Joint Staff, Air Staff, United States European Command and United States Strategic Command. He has been a member of numerous Civil War Round Table organizations and served as president of both the Sentry Civil War Round Table in Omaha, Neb. and the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table in Fredericksburg, Va. Additionally, he worked for over 15 years as a volunteer National Park Service tour guide and historian at Chancellorsville Battlefield and has led numerous Civil War battlefield tours and staff rides across Va., Md. and Pa.

**Diane Daniel** comes to us with an Associate's degree from the Southside Community College, a B.A. degree in business from Mary Baldwin College and a M.B.A in business from Averett University. She has worked as an accountant retiring from that work at the Southside Community College after 27 years of service. Her interest in local history is evident by the fact that she is the registrar for the local William Taylor Chapter of the DAR as well as the Secretary/ Registrar of the local Meherrin Chapter of the Colonial Dames.

TOBCF's Vice President **Chad Rhodes** resigned this year to dedicate himself to other equally worthwhile projects. He has joined the ranks of our other OBCF supporters and already has generously offered to continue moderating TOBCF's Facebook page. TOBCF is very appreciative of Chads years of work on our board. THANK YOU CHAD!

TOBCF is very fortunate to have a number of local supporters who frequently and quietly jump in without being asked to help in a million ways. Some like **Carol Corker** are prior board members. Carol solicited the help of her husband Tom this year when a tree fell on the Caretaker's Station at the Dromgoole Property. They got

the tree removed and patched the roof. Over the years **Tom King** has been a guardian and often jumps in as keeper of the grounds at the Dromgoole house-- making sure that the vegetation doesn't overrun the premises. Many thanks to them and others for their dedicated help.

## Gravestone Brings Awe & Reverence: Research Completes the Story

Dr. Ronald Brown and his colleague Dennis Wiens were involved in an educational mission trip to Mali, Africa. They were walking around Timbuktu, when they came upon a cemetery. After the whisk broom had swept off the desert sand, they reflected on this grave stone of Myrtle Kurlak. Somehow they knew she had been a missionary for the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C & MA).



*Photo courtesy of Dr. Ronald Brown*

The inscription on the gravestone said "having fought the good fight, she awaits the resurrection". She had died in Timbuktu at the young age of 32.

Ronald wrote about this gravestone on an online post and shared this photo of her gravestone. He reflected on the idea that "somewhere a community of faith had sent her literally to the ends of the earth; she was someone's daughter, someone's wife and someone's friend. Had she seen any converts among the Tauregs or Fulani before she died? She must have sown the seed. Her life was a witness in a dark place." He concluded with "For me in that Timbuktu cemetery there was a moment of awe and reverence."

Due to research done on the history of the Boydton Institute, we can now answer some of Ronald's questions.

Born in Magnolia, Stark County, Ohio on March 5, 1898, Myrtle Anna Endlich was the daughter of Jacob R. Endlich and Ida Mary McCaskey Endlich. From a hard working family, her father was a farmer, later ran a general grocery store and was a postmaster. His store (ca. 1902)



is pictured below with Ida and several of his children in front of their business and residence in Canton, Ohio. Based on the dates and information from descendants, it is very likely that Myrtle is the little girl on the far right in this photo



*Photo courtesy of Renee Guilliams, living relative of Myrtle Endlich Kurlak*

Myrtle Endlich was converted under the pastorate of Rev. S. M. Gerow at the Locust Street Church, a church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C & MA) in Akron, Ohio. This was where she dedicated her life to missionary work under the Alliance organization.

Little else is known of her younger years other than Myrtle and her sister Bernice Endlich were the winners of spelling contests in the county of Tuscarawas, Ohio. At the age of 17, Myrtle Endlich represented that county in the First State Spelling Contest held in Columbus, Ohio on June 4, 1915— a good indication of her intellectual aptitude.



*Photo used with permission of Alliance University (formerly Nyack College)*

Myrtle continued her education two more years--graduating from Nyack Missionary Training Institute (later Nyack College now Alliance University) in 1921. She is in the graduating class photo above (circled in red) along with Miss Ruth Morris (circled in blue) and Miss

Marie Freligh (unidentified). All three of these young ladies would later serve as missionaries in Africa.

Dr. Charles S. Morris was the first African American principal of the Boydton Institute. Ruth Morris was his daughter. After graduating Nyack both Ruth and Myrtle joined the teaching staff at the Boydton Institute where Myrtle taught for at least one year.

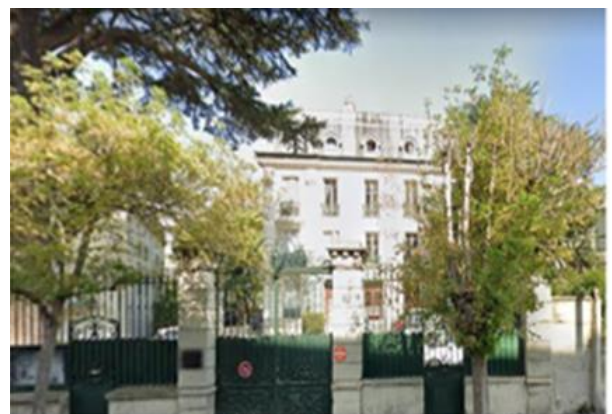


*Photo courtesy of the Archives of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Used with permission.*

In September of 1923 Myrtle submitted the photo on the left as part of the application for her passport before sailing in the company of other workers to France. She asked that the passport be sent to her "in care of A.C. Snead at 690 Eighth Ave, New York City". It is only from information in her application to begin missionary work with the Christian and Missionary Alliance that we learn that she

had no vision in her left eye. This however never seemed to diminish the energy or dedication she applied to her work.

While extending her passport from September 13, 1924 to September 13, 1925, she gave her foreign address as "39 Grande Rue, Nogent-sur-Marne". This is the address of the Bible Institute of Nogent, an Evangelical, Protestant interdenominational school located just outside of Paris. The Bible Institute of Nogent was founded in 1921 by an evangelical couple, Jeanne and Ruben Saillens. The goal of this school was to train evangelists, missionaries and more recently, social workers. Still operating today, students who attend this institute are of all nationalities who later go on to serve in different foreign countries. "From 1921 to 1965, the Nogent Institute was the main "hub" of the French evangelical movement."



*The Bible Institute of Nogent*

In the April 25, 1925 issue of their magazine, *The Alliance Weekly*, the Christian and Missionary Alliance referred to the Bible Institute of Nogent as a "veritable French Nyack". The following was extracted from that same article:

*During the past winter it has been the privilege of a group of nearly twenty Alliance missionaries to spend several months in France in final preparation for the Master's service in French Colonial possessions..... During our sojourn in France we were under the care of a French pastor Dr. R. Saillens, Madame Saillens and their daughter, who is the director of the Bible Institute at Nogent-sur-Marne..... Nogent is situated about ten miles from Paris, this enables us to go into the city every day to study French at the Alliance Francoise, a school under the auspices of the government, which has been established expressly for the purpose of teaching foreigners French.*

The article did not give the names of these twenty Alliance missionaries but based on Miss Endlich's address and the dates she was in France, it is possible that she was either among them or had a very similar travel and training experience.

Mr. Alfred C. Snead (1884-1961) had served as a missionary in India and later taught at Nyack (1918-1930) while Miss Endlich was in attendance there. In 1921 he was elected Foreign Secretary of the C & MA and as part of his responsibilities made a survey missionary trip to Africa. The Oct 18, 1924 issue of *The Alliance Weekly* reported that he was joined at the Port of La Pallice, France by Mr. Martin, Mr. Kurlak, Misses Sherwood, Mason, Liebman and Endlich--all bound for French West Africa.

Sometime between Miss Endlich's arrival in France and her arrival in Africa, she was married to another fellow missionary, Michael Kurlak.



*Taken on board the Steamer enroute Dakar to Conakry, French West Africa. From right to left: Michael Kurlak, Helen Sherwood, Willard Martin, Ruth Liebmann, Mrs. Michael Kurlak, Rev. R. S. Roseberry, Ethel Mason*

*Photo courtesy of the Archives of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Used with permission.*

As shown in the preceding photo, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kurlak, Mr. Willard/William Martin, Miss Helen Sherwood, Miss Ruth Liebman, Miss Ethel Mason and Rev. R.S. Roseberry departed to work as missionaries in French East Africa in 1925.

Rev. Michael Kurlak wrote "During our first term, the hardest of a missionary's activities, we learned a foreign language, translated many portions of Scripture, and won the friendship of these Mohammedan people, both men and women."

After four years, Myrtle and Michael returned to the United States leaving Africa on December 8, 1928 and reached the port of Boston on December 23, 1928 at which point records listed their address of residence as Canton, Ohio.

Sadly after returning to Timbuktu, Rev. Kurlak would become a grieving husband. During his bereavement he wrote "We were just beginning our second term in which we expected to see many things done among the natives by the hand of the Lord. We returned from an extended trip into the district and it was greater than her physical strength..... Her love for the womanhood of this land was poured out upon them; her life was a strength and joy to all who knew her and her ministry was unceasing".

Having worked for five years in Africa, during the 1929-30 conference year Myrtle had become sick with Black Water Fever. Black Water Fever is a complication of Malaria sometimes triggered by quinine which was used for its treatment. She passed away on June 9, 1930. No other missionaries were on station at the time and as communication was very difficult, her husband, Michael Kurlak, had to bury Myrtle himself with the aid of a few African friends.

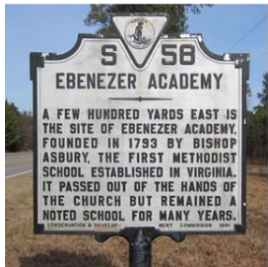
We recognize that Myrtle was a teacher at the Boydton Institute and by researching and publishing the information about her short but dedicated life, we give homage to her.

This pictorial biography was researched and compiled by Ann Keeling in support of the Old Brunswick Circuit Foundation. Thanks to Renee Guiliams, Dr. Ronald Brown, Faithe Norrell, the Christian and Missionary Alliance and Alliance University for the use of their photos and their information--both on-line and via emails. For more information about Dr. Ronald Brown and Dennis Wiens and their visit to Timbuktu see: <https://globalvaultacademy.wordpress.com/2020/10/07/timbuktu/>.



## Signs—Pointing the Way

Much to the advantage of TOBCF, several charitable or state organizations have recently added or are improving signage that inform visitors about and direct them toward our historical sites.



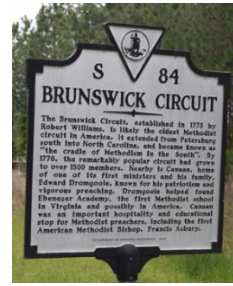
### TOBACCO HERITAGE TRAIL

In Southern Virginia, an exciting regional trail project has been taking shape for over a decade. The Tobacco Heritage Trail will one day span 160 miles, connecting the counties of Brunswick, Charlotte, Halifax, Lunenburg, and Mecklenburg. Currently, segments of the planned route—totaling 22.7 miles—are open. One completed 1.1 mile portion of this trail has its trailhead at 564 Washington Street-- located on the northeast corner of the town of Boydton.

This year the Rails-to-Trails program has installed signs that direct visitors from that end of the trail into the center of the town and then on to the intersection of Jefferson Street and the Taylor's Ferry Road—right to the gates of our Randolph Macon College and Boydton Institute site. From there the trail leads south to the Roanoke River. Called the "Boydton Loop", this trail spur takes advantage of the paved streets of Boydton to encourage hikers, bikers, and horseback riders to become welcomed visitors to our historical property in Boydton.

### VIRGINIA HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS

The Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) manages the Virginia historical highway marker program. Under this program historical highway markers are erected throughout the state to educate the public about Virginia's history. These markers are historically factual and not honorific in nature. There are three such markers (shown on this page) that provide information relevant to the historical properties owned by TOBCF.



Jennifer Loux, the highway marker program manager at the VDHR contacted TOBCF in August. She said they are working on a replacement for the deteriorated Ebenezer Academy S-58 marker in Brunswick County. As the organization working to preserve this site, she solicited inputs from TOBCF on its history. We are happy to announce that this new marker will likely be ready for installation next spring or summer.

### THE CIVIL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION HERITAGE TRAIL

The Civil Rights in Education Heritage Trail is a self-guided driving tour spanning fifteen Virginia counties. It features more than 50 well-preserved and historically significant sites. These sites revisit the hard-fought civil rights victories achieved by African Americans, Native Americans and women in Virginia. It is managed by the Virginia Crossroads, a tourism marketing consortium. While on this tour, trailblazing signs lead you from one attraction to the next. One such sign is located on the west side of Boydton, Virginia on Route 58. It stands near three Virginia historic highway markers including one about our historic site, the Old Randolph Macon College. However, having suffered a number of years of weathering, this one sign was in need of special care and in the summer of 2021 Virginia Crossroads attentively rebuilt its base and replaced its deteriorating plaque. TOBCF was especially appreciative of their work because this sign showcases another major significance of TOBCF's Boydton site: the history of the Boydton Academic and Bible Institute. Commonly referred to simply as the Boydton Institute, this facility -- opened on the abandoned and later refurbished campus of the Randolph Macon College --was a "mecca of education" for African Americans from 1869 into the 1930's.

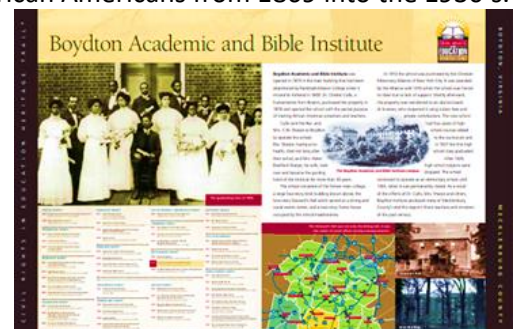


Photo courtesy of Tina Morgan, Tourism Coordinator for Mecklenburg County., VA

**THANKS TO ALL FOR THE WONDERFUL SIGNAGE!**