



Heritage Center Report to the Northampton County Board of Supervisors: August 2023

It is with honor and gratitude that I present this summary report of activities of the ESVA Heritage Center for Fiscal Year 2023. Your support of this project is appreciated by an international scope of researchers as well as local historians. This past year has been a season of transition as we prepare for our permanent home at the Regional Library, while we also continued to provide the outstanding services to which the community is accustomed.

Over the past year, the Heritage Center has:

- Answered over 320 separate reference queries, 70% of which were in-person visits;
- Served 80 individuals from Northampton and 106 from Accomack Counties;
- Assisted with 92 queries specifically related to Northampton and 82 about Accomack;
- Garnered over 36,000 hits over various internet platforms;
- Covered 600 different topics – Eastern Shore history, genealogy, and African American history most requested;
- Been featured on WESR and in the *Eastern Shore Post*.

The proud cultural history of the Shore is evidenced by all of the families and historians who sought to preserve it. The work of Brooks Miles Barnes and the volumes in the Eastern Shore Room provide the basis of the Heritage Center. This is bolstered by the archival collections of Frances Bibbins Latimer, Kirk Mariner, Katharine Edmonds, and many others. This year we have added materials related to the Black Community in Cape Charles; Benjamin and Bessie Gunter; local work among citizens with disabilities; and prominent Shore families.

As we begin the relocation process, we look forward to the modern facility that you have so generously supported. The growth in collecting, preservation, and research services will serve and greatly benefit our community and the cultural heritage of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Respectfully,

Christopher Pote
Heritage Center Manager