

Times in Toano



Volume 3 Issue 3

Fall 2022

Newsletter
of the
Toano
Historical
Society

A Letter from Jack Wray THS President



I had a "being in the right place at the right time" moment last month. While sitting at the bar (surprise surprise) at Two Drummer's Smokehouse I got waved down by a guy sitting a few stools down from me.

He overheard me talking about Toano. (Surprise surprise) This fellow introduced himself as Daniel Guntherberg. He told me he had a photo of the original Toano depot sign that once hung on the Toano train station on Depot Street.

Unlike the Norge and Yewell Depots, the Toano Depot did not survive and was demolished in the 1980s. As it turned out, Daniel not only had a photo of the depot sign but knew where it was and who had it! I gave him my contact info and told him I'd like to talk to the person in charge of it.

Two weeks went by and I got an email from William Grimes, board member and director of Lee Hall Station Foundation in Newport News. He said a former CSX Railroad employee, Terry Crisp, left it on the doorstep of the Lee Hall Depot and said they could have it. He apparently collected C&O railroad artifacts and had the sign for several years. When Grimes found out we had a 501c3 organization advocating for the revitalization of Toano he said he'd like to gift the sign to THS on behalf of Lee Hall Station Foundation. This was wonderful news that we would receive such a remarkable artifact!

Board member and Newsletter Editor Tim Martin and I went down to the Lee Hall Depot Station on October 15th, got a grand tour of their depot, picked up the sign and brought it back home. It's now hanging proudly on the wall of the old Martin Store Building.

Best Regards,

Jack



Billy Grimes presents Toano sign to Jack Wray and Tim Martin



Toano Depot sign in Martin Store Building



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**4th Annual Toano
Christmas Tree Lighting
Saturday, December 3, 2022
3:00-7:00 pm**



Kick off the holiday season at the 4th Annual Toano Christmas Tree Lighting on Saturday, December 3rd!

Activities will include: Christmas music, food, wagon rides, crafts & games for the kids, visits with Santa, the tree lighting and more! Santa and his elves will arrive at 3:30. At 5:00 we will hear a community message and the ringing of the Mount Vernon UMC church bell, followed by the tree and village lighting. It's an event guaranteed to get you into the Christmas spirit!

The event will take place on the Toano Village Green located at 7889 Richmond Road (across from the Toano Post Office).



Become a Member of THS

Please consider becoming a member of THS to help us preserve and promote the history of Toano.

Annual Membership Cost:
\$25 Individual, \$35 Family, \$55 Business

Go to the [Membership Page](#) of the THS website to sign up and pay online, or sign up at the THS table at the Toano Open Air Market.

THS Membership Renewal

Current THS members are asked to renew their memberships for 2023. We appreciate your continuing support of our mission and vision!

A reminder letter has been sent to all members. Renewals can be done online, by mail, or in person at the Open Air Market. Don't miss out on our member events in the coming year!

Meet the THS Board Members Emmalyn Carter, Social Media



Emmalyn was born in Richmond, VA but spent most of her life in the small, historic village of Irvington, located on the Rappahannock River. When looking for somewhere with a similar small town feel, she moved to Toano in 2015.

Emmalyn was taught from a young age to treasure things that are old. Her Carter grandparents restored a 1690s waterfront colonial home on the Rappahannock River where they raised her father and his eight siblings. Emmalyn's mother also has a love for history, and she has used historical footage in the production of two of her PBS films.

Since moving to Toano, Emmalyn has become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and works as a therapist helping others improve their mental health. Emmalyn and her husband Jonathan married in June of this year at the site of the Whalehead Club, a 1920's era historical mansion located in the Outer Banks.

Emmalyn enjoys photography, spending time with family, going to the Toano Market and enjoying the local parks with her two dogs, Bella and Bear.

Emmalyn was drawn to the Toano Historical Society's mission to promote community spirit while preserving the unique history and small town character of the town. Emmalyn is the Social Media Chair for the THS board. Her focus is to keep the community connected with what's new with THS.



Follow us on Facebook

Follow the Toano Historical Society on Facebook to get information and updates about upcoming events. You can also find interesting historical photos and stories.

Toano History Spotlight: The Toano Depot

By Fred Boelt, THS Historian

The original Chesapeake and Ohio railroad right of way actually crossed Forge Road, passed through Sunnyside (the Branch family farm), came through the present-day village green area where TOAM and the annual Christmas tree lightings are held, crossed Richmond Road approximately where the entrance to Burnt Ordinary Apartments is located, and continued on an easterly course. Beginning in 1881, tracks were

laid starting in Richmond with Newport News being the end destination. The urgency was to provide transportation for dignitaries coming to the centennial of the American

Revolution to be held in Yorktown in October. However, the tracks were not completed until 1882.

The first Toano depot was built on the current village green site. Additionally, there was a water tower located adjacent to the depot so engines could take on water as they stopped. Remembering that locomotives were steam driven at the time, they needed to regularly replenish their water supply. The arrival of passenger and freight train service through Burnt Ordinary, renamed Toano at this time, opened up the area for commerce. The agricultural commodities could now be sent to markets with reduced spoilage. Ultimately, the former crossroads developed into a support village with stores, hotels, a bank, a drugstore, doctors' offices, a lawyer, local newspaper, and in time, two barrel factories and a cannery.

As with all railroads, there were the usual snafus, but one incident stood out in a local boy's memory. Joseph Carlton, born in 1892, whose parents ran the Felix Hotel, recalled a very loud clash of steel early one morning. As it turned out, an east bound work train was supposed to

have moved to the siding near Diascund to allow the west bound "fast freight" to pass on the single track. For reasons unknown, the work train instead continued through on the single track and collided with the west bound train, leaving the two engines standing erectly against each other. Joseph recalled going to look at the wreck on his way to school at Hickory Neck Academy, and further stated that it happened in front of



The second Toano Depot was built in a new location after the tracks were relocated by C&O Railroad to bypass Toano sometime around 1909

the new depot which was not yet in service. Hickory Neck Academy closed in 1908, when Toano High School was opened. Joseph also recalled that one of the freight cars was loaded with chocolate, and a train-

man passed chocolates around to all the curious children.

There is an undated photo in the THS archive collection of the C & O survey team that came to lay out the right of way to relocate the tracks around the village. Undoubtedly, as the horse and buggy/wagon traffic grew, the constant rumbling of the trains across the main street of the village became dangerous and intolerable. An article in the January 7, 1909, Virginia Gazette, stated: "The C & O railroad put a large force to work Monday at Toano laying track and putting down ballast on the new right of way. Work has begun on the new depot near the cannery. It is a large and pretty frame building."

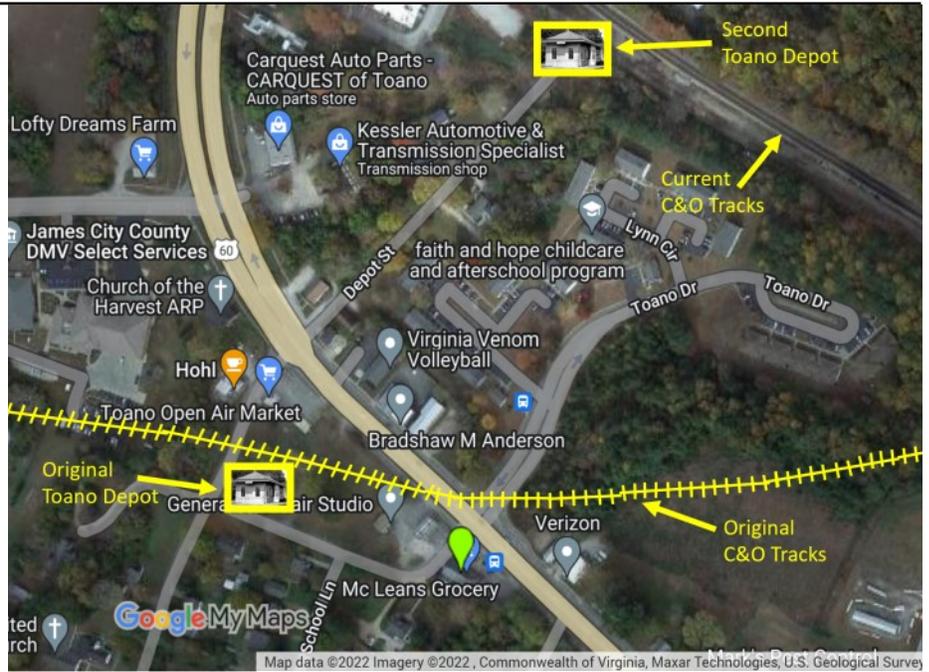
Ultimately, the tracks were relocated to the present-day route, the new depot replaced the one on the present village green area, and the water tower was moved to the Norge depot. Depot Street in Toano leads to the site of the second depot now demolished. We are, indeed, fortunate to have recently been given one of the original "TOANO" signs from the second depot. Our collection of early village memorabilia grows!

Map showing the C&O Railroad in Toano before and after 1909

The yellow tracks mark the approximate location where the C&O Railroad crossed Rt. 60 in Toano before 1909.

The original Toano Depot was located near where the Toano Open Air Market is held today.

Around 1909, C&O Railroad (now CSX) relocated the tracks to bypass Toano and put a new Depot in service. THS is thrilled to have recently acquired the TOANO depot sign from this building.



THS Receives Grant From Virginia Main Street

In 2020, the Toano Historical Society became a Main Street America Affiliate, making us part of a national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities who share a commitment to building stronger communities through preservation-based community revitalization.

Main Street America is a mark of distinction. We are part of a national movement with a proven track record for celebrating community character, preserving local history, and generating impressive economic returns. The Virginia Main Street (VMS) program uses the national program's approach and offers services and assistance to communities interested in revitalizing their historic commercial districts.

We are happy to announce that Toano Historical Society is a recipient of the Virginia Main Street Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) 2023 Community Vitality Grant in the amount of \$7,000. This grant will enable us to strengthen as an organization and increase our community engagement as we lead the Toano revitalization efforts

BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

If you have some time to give and would like to be a part of making Toano a desirable place to **live, work and visit**, check out our volunteer opportunities below and email us at info@toanohistoricalsociety.org.

- 1 the Creative**
The volunteer who has lots of great ideas (and a little experience) when it comes to art, landscaping and anything that makes a public space beautiful. Give you a blank slate and you'll give us a masterpiece!
Commitment Level: Low to Medium
- 2 the Multitalented**
The volunteer who has all the ideas for how to enhance Toano from small business recruitment and retention to fun events! Give you a chance at it all and see what Toano can become!
Commitment Level: Medium to High
- 3 the Business Advocate**
The volunteer who has a passion for strengthening local businesses. Give you a stage to talk about how to support and promote small biz and you'll have us buzzing with excitement!
Commitment Level: Low to Medium
- 4 the Event-er**
The volunteer who wants to help only during events! You can come enjoy the event and volunteer as much or as little as you are available. Give you a role that day and you're on it!
Commitment Level: Low to High
- 5 the Event Planner**
The volunteer who has time to help plan and prepare for an event. Give you a reason to plan and organize and you'll have our events become the talk of the community!
Commitment Level: Medium to High
- 6 the Marketer**
The volunteer who loves Toano and has marketing experience! Give you a chance at the marketing mix and we'll find out just how well known Toano, Virginia can become!
Commitment Level: Low to High

THS Fall Members Event Featured Mayor of Gordonsville

On October 27, 2022, over 100 THS members and special guests gathered in the Martin Store for the Fall Members Event. The evening began with refreshments, including delicious treats from hohl. The group had time for socializing and looking at some of our Toano historical memorabilia.

The evening's speaker was Bobby Coiner, the mayor of Gordonsville, Virginia. Gordonsville is a former railroad town that has undergone a successful revitalization. It is hoped that Toano can learn from the Gordonsville experience in its own revitalization efforts.



*Gordonsville Mayor Bobby Coiner likes the work THS is doing!
Photo by THS*

Bobby began his talk with a statement about the mission of THS. "You don't have to be from Toano to know that this is a noble effort." He believes that the soul of America is in small towns like Toano. He affirmed the work of our historical society

in that our history, buildings, and architecture tell the story of the town.

Based on his experience in Gordonsville, Bobby knows the challenges of creating interest and raising funds for a revitalization effort. His message was, "Keep the faith and keep working toward your goals. Don't give up!" He offered advice on fund raising and identifying donors. We have a vision that will appeal to people and make them want to be a part of our efforts. Folks here have a connection to our town and Bobby stated that THS is doing good work. Our goal is to restore what was taken away when Route 60 was widened in the 1960s. He believes that we will succeed in our "noble



task." We will build on our love of history, architecture, and families. We are connected to our past, and we want to move forward with planning rather than random growth.

Bobby was an informative speaker and is also a new THS member! We are happy to have him as a part of the Toano Historical Society, and we also appreciate his generous contribution to our organization.

Watch for information on our next members event coming up in the Spring!



Hohl provided a delicious assortment of savory and sweet sensations at the event



THS Fall Members Event photos courtesy of the Courtney Martinez Real Estate Team



Check out the Toano Open Air Market on Saturdays (9am-1pm) on the Toano Village Green. Over 20 vendors are on site offering a wide variety of items for sale. Most weeks feature live music and a food truck.

THS will also be there with merchandise and information about how we are working to further our mission. Come out and support family farms and local agriculture and businesses!



Toano Historical Society Board of Directors

President, Jack Wray

Secretary, Richard Krapf

Treasurer, Susan Kohlman

Historian, Fred Boelt

Virginia Main Street Liaison, Deidre McAuley-Hayes

Newsletter, Tim and Patte Martin

Volunteer and Programs & Events Coordinators,
Lindsey Wagner & Samantha Share

Social Media Chair, Emmalyn Carter

Board Member-At-Large, Rena Wray

Membership & Website, Tim Martin



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