

# Times in Toano



Volume 2 Issue 3

**Fall 2021**

**Newsletter  
of the  
Toano  
Historical  
Society**

**3rd Annual Toano Christmas Tree Lighting  
Saturday, November 27, 2021  
3:00–7:00 pm  
Toano Village Green**



The Toano Historical Society invites the community to this special event to kick off the Christmas season! There will be activities for the kids, wagon rides, pictures with Santa, and the lighting of the Toano Christmas tree.

Vendors from the Toano Open Air Market will be on site, and food will be available from the Matchsticks BBQ food truck.

Join your neighbors and friends for a festive afternoon that will put you in the Christmas spirit!



The tree and village lighting will take place around 5:15 pm. The full event schedule and parking information is available on the THS website ([toanohistoricalsociety.org](http://toanohistoricalsociety.org)).



[Toanohistoricalsociety.org](http://Toanohistoricalsociety.org)

Contact us at:

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## THS Merchandise at the Toano Open Air Market

THS merchandise is available for purchase at the Toano Open Air Market. Items include *The History and Revitalization of Toano* and notecards featuring paintings of old Toano buildings by Toano artist Bill Shockley. We also have T-shirts (see new design below), hats, and watercolor note cards by former Toano resident Louanne Martin, and the 2nd edition of *From Toano to Germany and Back*.

### 2021 Toano Christmas Ornament

Add to your Toano ornament collection or start a new tradition with the 2021 Toano Christmas ornament. This year's ornament features the familiar trio of historic buildings in Toano and will add a beautiful local touch to your tree! Ornaments can be purchased at the THS table at the Toano Open Air Market and at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting.



### New THS Shirt Design

Check out our new T-shirt design, now available at the Toano Open Air Market. Show your Toano pride by wearing one of these new styles!



## Become a Member of THS

### Online signup now available!

If you would like to support the work of the Toano Historical Society, please consider becoming a member.

Annual Membership Cost:

\$25 Individual, \$35 Family, \$55 Business

How to join:

- Go to the Membership Page of the THS website to sign up and pay online
- Sign up at the THS table at the Toano Open Air Market

### Volunteers Needed for THS Events

Are you a good organizer?

Have experience with event planning?

Then we can use your help!

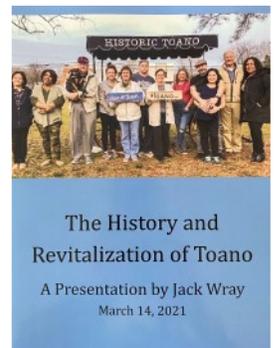
THS is currently seeking volunteers for our Programs and Events Planning Committee. If interested, contact Deidre McAuley-Hayes at [info@toanohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@toanohistoricalsociety.org).



### *The History and Revitalization of Toano*

Based on a presentation by Jack Wray to the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society, this book tells the history of Toano and summarizes the current work for its revitalization. It is filled with pictures from across the years. Anyone interested in the history and future of our village should check it out.

The book is available for purchase on Amazon or at the THS table at the Toano Open Air Market. All proceeds will go to the Toano Historical Society.



## A Letter from Jack Wray THS President

Dear Friends of Toano Historical Society,



From an early age, I've always admired old buildings and houses. My grandparents lived next door in an older house (1920) and my grandfather's general merchandise store (1906) was just across the street. I spent lots of time in both places growing up in Toano. I guess my love of history and old buildings began back then.

As builders in Charlottesville, my brother, Jeff and I occasionally performed contracts involving historic preservation. These were always our favorite projects.

In 1986, our general contracting company, Wray Bros Inc., was the successful bidder of a new project at Ashlawn Highland, the home of our 5th president, James Monroe. It is owned by the College of William and Mary. From a photograph taken in 1904 of a building known as the servants' quarters, local Charlottesville architects Browne, Eichman, Dalgliesh and Gilpin designed a new building that duplicated to scale the facade of the former servants' quarters. It was to be built on the exact location of the original and become a new space for events.

One of the most interesting things about this project, aside from spending 6 months on the historic property, was the reconstruction of the chimneys. The photo revealed they were built out of field stone probably collected on the site. At the very top of the chimneys, forming a lip, were pieces of 1" slabs of slate. The director of Ashlawn at that time, Carolyn Holmes, arranged for us to collect field stones from Morven Stud Farm, owned by John Kluge. It was less than a half mile from Ashlawn. We took our dump truck out to his fields and were able to collect enough stones for the chimney. Then it was on to Buckingham Slate Co. where we picked up discarded pieces of slate for the chimney tops. Other than our labor to gather up these materials, they were all free and donated to the project. I believe this was when I really got the bug for historic preservation.



Fast forward to today. Wray Bros Inc. is restoring the historic Travers House (circa 1912) on the corner of Church Lane and Rt. 60 in our hometown of Toano. We have salvaged as much of the original home as possible, including the wood framing, tongue and groove floorboards, windows, metal roofing, and exterior doors.

In addition to using materials from the original home, we are repurposing historic interior millwork components from Variety Grove, a 1901 Toano Landmark House on Forge Road that was demolished last year. Other components, like the wood porch columns and rails and wood paneling around the bar and display counters were salvaged from a farmhouse we dismantled in Charlottesville in 2003 known as Oakleigh, built in 1887. The front door is late 1800s and has beveled glass and a mail slot. We found another period door for the back porch at Lucky Junque. Lastly, we were able to salvage a couple of things we'll be using from the rubble of the recently demolished Gatewood House.



When the bakery finally opens in early 2022, I hope patrons will enjoy the local history that's been used to rebuild this modest little house on the corner.

*Jack Wray*

## Toano Loses Historic Gatewood House

Our community was saddened by the news that the Gatewood house, which was once a wonderful landmark in Toano, has been torn down. Efforts to protect this historic building were unsuccessful, and we are heartbroken that a solution to save the Gatewood was not realized. The building was demolished by its owner on September 7, 2021. It is part of the mission of THS to protect our historic buildings and landmarks, and we will continue to work toward this goal.



*The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street. There is no chance to renovate or save a historic site once it's gone. And we can never be sure what will be valued in the future. This reality brings to light the importance of locating and saving buildings of historic significance—because once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever.*

Jack Neely, "Nine Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings"

## THS Fall Event Recap Ed McMahon Presentation

Toano Historical Society recently hosted its Fall Event for THS Members and special guests at the Martin-Farinholt Store. The guest speaker for the evening was Ed McMahon, the former Chair of Main Street America and current Chair of Sustainable Development and Economic Policy for the Urban Land Institute in Washington DC.



Mr. McMahon spoke about the importance of historic preservation and community revitalization in small towns. He shared some benefits small town character brings, including a small downtown, providing a strong sense of community, the attractiveness of green spaces, walkable/bikeable pedestrian areas and mixed-use buildings. He discussed how historic preservation and community revitalization can go hand-in-hand by incorporating history into architecture. He provided examples of successful revitalization efforts in other locations across the U.S. that are similar to the Toano community.

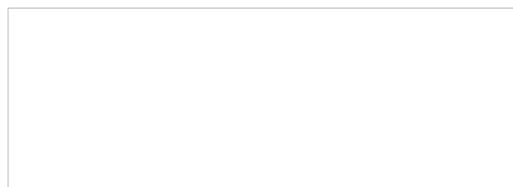


Thank you to all the THS members and special guests in attendance. We look forward to having more THS Members Events in the future. If you are interested in becoming a THS member, please visit the Membership page on our website for more information.

Toano Historical Society

PO Box 433

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