



PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 066-0110 (Teacher's Cottage 066-0098)

1. General Property Information

Property name: Howland Chapel School Nomination Update (Emily Howland Cottage)

Property address: Courthouse Road

City or Town: Heathsville

Zip code: 22473

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Northumberland County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building X Site _____ Structure _____ Object _____

2. Physical Aspects

Acreage: 1.62 total

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban _____ Suburban _____ Town _____ Village _____ Hamlet _____ Rural X

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The Howland Teachers' Cottage is located in a rural area of Northumberland County about three and a half miles south of Heathsville, the county seat. Situated on a level, 1.62-acre tract at the intersection of VA Routes 201 and 642, the cottage is surrounded on three sides by open fields. About a hundred yards south of the cottage, directly across Rt. 201, stands the First Baptist Church of Heathsville, a large brick church built in the early twentieth century. The only other buildings within view are a few dwellings along Rt. 201 a quarter mile or more away.

3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Vernacular; Gothic Revival

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: _____

If the builder is known, please list here: _____

Date of construction (can be approximate): c. 1870

Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

Howland Chapel School is the oldest standing schoolhouse in Northumberland County, and possibly the earliest public schoolhouse on the Northern Neck. The one-story frame building was erected by New York educator, reformer and philanthropist Emily Howland (1827-1929), after whom it was named. The school was listed on the NRHP/VLR in 2008, but the Cottage was not included due to owner objection. This house still stands with minimal alterations but was moved to the site of the school, adjacent to its original location and in keeping with the orientation/relationship to the school, in 2008 with DHR's guidance following the Secretary of Interior's Standards and DHR archaeologists' recommendations. It is the only other early building associated with Howland School that has survived to the present.

The Howland Teachers' Cottage is currently vacant and is a secondary building on the Howland Chapel School site. Its historic use was a house for the founder of the Howland Chapel School, Emily Howland, and later served as dormitory style housing and classroom space for students. Due to its historic association with the school, the cottage should be included as an additional resource in the nomination for the Howland Chapel School as it provides a full understanding of how a rural school for Black students operated in the Reconstruction Era in rural Virginia.

The Howland Teachers' Cottage is a vernacular Gothic Revival cottage with most historic features intact. The original form of the cottage appears to have been single pile with a second story and at least a partial basement level. Based on oral history and preliminary physical assessment of the cottage in-situ, the original first floor was accessed by an offset central entrance door with a single window to its side. By the 1890s, the building had gained an additional bay to the side of the façade window with a change to the roofline. At that time, the building was a three-bay frame house with two central stove chimneys. A two-story ell was added to the rear elevation, but the date is presently undetermined.

In a bullet list, include any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

- The cottage shares the site with the Howland Chapel School and rehabilitated outhouse.

4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property.

If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

As early as 1867, Howland had voiced plans to build a cottage for herself and the other teachers who would be coming to Howland School. She and her acquaintance, a Colonel Folsom, chose the site for the cottage at the when she purchased the property. When she requested the Freedmen's Bureau to send her eight window sashes for her school, Colonel Folsom added to the shipment his gift of sixteen new windows, ten of which were earmarked for her house.

In 1870, Emily Howland had a one-and-a-half-story frame, board-and-batten house built for herself a quarter mile west of Howland School. In a letter she wrote to an aunt in January 1870, Howland mentioned that she had begun "a little house near her schoolhouse for a teachers' home," and that she expected it to be completed by the following winter. The original form of the house is not known, but a 1890s photo of the building shows it to have been a three-bay frame house with two central stove chimneys. At some point, a rear, two-story ell was added to the cottage.

Shortly after Miss Howland settled several black families on the 350-acre tract of land she had purchased in December 1866, they began to build modest frame dwellings on the property. In 1921, Howland gave the teacher's cottage and its fourteen-acre tract to Sidney Taliaferro Boyer and Sidney's husband, Chester Boyer.

By the 1880s and '90s, some of the students that Howland had sent north to be educated had returned home to Northumberland to teach in the school or to serve as teaching apprentices. These included Benjamin Taliaferro's daughter, Sidney; her sister Rebecca Taliaferro; her cousin Eliza J. Taliaferro (daughter of Beverly), Lucinda Green (daughter of Wesley Green); Joseph Walker, and Kate Howland Boyer. (Kate's sister, Susie Boyer Conley, taught at Stebbins School.) With these, were young White teachers from the North, including (after Sarah Goodyear) a Miss Young, Rebecca Mason and Anna Stanton. In the 1890s, Sidney Taliaferro returned to Northumberland with her husband Chester Boyer, after having taught school in Chestertown, Maryland for several years. Her brother-in-law Joseph Boyer and his wife Amelia also came to live and work at Arcadia. Joseph and Amelia lived in the industrial annex and looked after the boarding students. In addition, Amelia taught needlework skills to the female students. At that time, most older students took courses in the industrial arts: these included shoemaking, basketry, millinery, weaving, and carpentry. Students in the industrial arts program were encouraged to market their products.

In 1890, Howland sold Taliaferro the house, together with a 23-acre tract of adjoining the schoolhouse. Seven years later, after his heirs had sold it back to Howland, she enlarged and remodeled the building to serve as a dormitory for boarding students and for housing industrial-arts classrooms. The industrial-arts rooms were located in a two-story wing at the rear of the original dwelling. The annex, as it came to be called, continued to serve its original purpose until about 1921, when Howland sold it to Joseph and Amelia Boyer, who used it as a dwelling. The cottage is currently undergoing structural assessment, documentation, and initial stabilization. Once the building is safe to enter and use, as much of its historic materials and design will be preserved and rehabilitated for use as part of the school museum site and furnished with original furniture and belongings for accurate site interpretation.

Emily Howland

Born in 1827, Emily Howland was the only daughter of Slocum Howland, a Quaker and wealthy merchant of Scipio, Cayuga County, New York. Slocum Howland was an abolitionist whose home served occasionally as a

station on the Underground Railroad. Emily shared her father's convictions. At the age of thirty-one, feeling the need to take an active role in the anti-slavery movement, she went to Washington, D.C. to teach in Miss Myrtila Miner's school for free Negro girls.' In 1863, Howland returned to Washington to teach at a freedmen's camp.' There, she forged close ties with a group of former enslaved persons, several of whom had family living in Northumberland County, Virginia. After the war ended, Howland became increasingly frustrated with the government's failure to provide adequate support for the freedmen. Eventually she devised a plan whereby she would assist the former slaves herself. She would buy a tract of land and settle three or four families on it, allotting each an area on which to live, raise a garden, and earn a modest income. When they were financially able, she would sell them their portions of her land at reasonable prices.' With her father's financial assistance, she put her plan into motion in the spring of 1866. She began to look for the ideal tract of land.' In 1865, Howland had written of the freedmen, "I find one general voice, all wish to return to their former homes" Some of the freedmen she had come to know best had formerly lived in Northumberland County, and she decided that was where she would carry out her plan.

One of Howland's acquaintances in Washington was Ephraim Nash, a former civil servant and part-time politician, who had recently bought land in Northumberland for speculation. He told her of an adjoining tract that was currently for sale. On June 4, 1866, he, his wife and children, and Miss Howland went to see the land in Northumberland. On August 29, Howland wrote in her journal: "I am now fully decided to buy the land B. Tolliver [Taliaferro; a freedman] who moved there last spring said that the man for whom he works sent me word, if I came, he would help me build a schoolhouse." In December of 1866, Howland paid \$1,650 for approximately 350 acres of land near Heathsville." She immediately settled three or four of the contraband camp families on it. Her colonists were the extended families of "Uncle Moses" Washington, Lewis Carter and Benjamin Taliaferro. Howland named her new property "Arcadia."

Living in Northumberland was a new way of life for Howland, one characterized by what she termed "funny strange modes." No doubt it was a challenge for a woman raised in a comfortable upper-middle-class household in New York to move to rural Virginia to live among impoverished Black farmers--simultaneously facing constant resentment and prejudice from local Whites. Apparently, she adjusted well to her new situation, though, for within several months of moving to the Northern Neck she wrote: "If it were not for the wood ticks, I should find nothing disagreeable here. " One of Howland's neighboring landowners was Alexander ("Uncle Alex") Day, a Black man whose family had long been free." His land was the site of a "preacher's stand," or brush arbor, where local Blacks worshipped. It was there that Howland first met with the local freedmen community to discuss building a school." Soon after she arrived in Northumberland, Howland began teaching children in a fifteen square foot log cabin that already stood on her property. She was delighted with the response she received. She wrote, "The smallest of them I believe considers the school a boon for which they cannot be glad and grateful enough. This is the ideal school I had never hoped to find, where the young minds were ready to be led up without pinching, jostling or tricks. It seems now to me that I must hitherto have taught a reform school." To assist her at the school, Howland soon engaged her neighbor, F. Eugene Dow, a young land speculator from New England. Dow was the protege of Miss Laura Stebbins, a wealthy spinster and teacher who had raised and educated him. Stebbins had bought Dow a large parcel of land on the north bank of the Great Wicomico River from which he was then cutting wood for sale in Baltimore. He boarded at the home of a local family named Nash, the same house where Miss Howland boarded before her cottage was completed." In May of 1867, Howland wrote, "Uncle Aleck & I have marked out the ground for the church & school building. I am pushing them to get it up, we are so crowded. He intends to have it called 'The Howland Chapel.' I would like far better that it were Howland School. A school is what I would like my name perpetuated by." Nevertheless, for many years the building was known informally as Howland Chapel, as it was the meeting place for the congregation that eventually became First Baptist Church." By the time Howland began building her schoolhouse, more space was desperately needed: an average of forty children attended each day; about the same number of adults attended at night, and about 120 people came there on the Sabbath for

Sunday school. Howland was delighted when the first White child came to school there on June 3, 1867. She looked forward to the time when the completion of her school would give her enough space so that she could encourage the "poor Whites" to come there to be educated." Whites, however, never attended in any numbers, and the school remained segregated for all but the first years of its 101-year existence. A report on her school dated July 13, 1867, and sent to General Brown, stated that "Miss Emily Howland of Central New York has located at Heathsville and is engaged in teaching the colored people. Her school numbers sixty pupils with an average attendance of forty-five. The school room at present is a log cabin about fifteen feet square, and very uncomfortable and close. Miss Howland has purchased about four hundred acres of land and the colored people are using small lots of 5 and 10 acres thereof without charge. She has commenced the erection of a frame schoolhouse 26 x 40 giving the land and sufficient funds to get the frame up and almost covered. The work must now stop for want of about two hundred dollars to buy nails, shingles, glass & . . . She has induced several poor White children to enter her school and study and recite side by side with the colored children."

In February 1869, Howland deeded the schoolhouse and its small parcel of land to a board of trustees, charging them to comply strictly with the purposes set forth in the deed, i.e., that "no person shall be excluded on account of race, color, or sex," and that the building be used for no purpose other than a school or for religious services of the Baptist Church, or "other worthy purposes to be held in the schoolhouse at times not interfering with the school." The appointed trustees were Benjamin and Beverly Taliaferro, Robert Walker, Maurice Moore and Miss Howland herself." As word of Howland School spread through the Northern Neck, Miss Howland began to receive requests from other communities to help establish schools. The first such request came in 1867. Howland wrote, "some col'd people some miles from here too far to come to my school beseech me to get them a teacher. They say they will either pay her board or furnish her with a house and a man or woman to wait on her and pledge \$100 salary." It is probable that this request came from the people of nearby Lottsburg, because another Northern teacher in Northumberland, Miss Caroline Putnam, wrote soon afterward to her companion and fellow abolitionist Sallie Holley saying "Emily wants you to work and teach among her people in Virginia. She thinks you would be an admirable person to go." It was this suggestion that encouraged Miss Holley, also a native of New York state, to establish Holley School in Lottsburg. (Holley School was founded in 1869 and remained in operation as a Black public school until 1959). Howland also encouraged Laura Stebbins to create a school for Blacks (later known as Stebbins School) on the Northumberland County tract Miss Stebbins had purchased for Eugene Dow. Howland herself funded an unnamed school at Kinsale, in neighboring Westmoreland County, where she taught for about six weeks in 1870.

As early as 1867, Howland had voiced plans to build a cottage for herself and the other teachers who would be coming to Howland School. She and her friend, Colonel Folsom, had decided on the site for the cottage at the same time she purchased the property. Financing this venture must have been touch-and-go, judging from Howland's letters. When she requested the Freedmen's Bureau to send her eight window sashes for her school, Colonel Folsom added to the shipment his gift of sixteen new windows, ten of which were earmarked for her house." In a letter she wrote to an aunt in January 1870, Howland mentioned that she had begun "a little house near her schoolhouse for a teachers' home," and that she expected it to be completed by the following winter. In February 1870, while Howland was still teaching at the new school in Kinsale, she was unexpectedly called home to Scipio to care for her ailing father. This return marked the end of her residence in Virginia. From that time on she never managed more than brief visits to Arcadia, visits that eventually became annual ones. However, for some fifty years--until 1921--she continued to choose the teachers and aides for the school and pay their salaries, as well as bear the expense of maintaining the school and farm. Beginning in 1873, Howland began to sell small parcels of the Arcadia property. However, the first sales were not to her original colonists, but rather to other persons who had become associated with the Arcadia community: essentially, the second group of colonists. Included in this group were Wesley Green, Griffin Williams and Emily Ball.

From 1870 to 1881, Howland stayed at home to look after her father. With his death in 1881, she became heiress to a substantial estate. For the next forty-eight years she gave generously from that estate toward the support of black education throughout the South. To those she helped personally, she usually said, "Thee need not repay me; pass it on to someone else." November of 1888 found Miss Emily at the teacher's cottage at Arcadia for her annual visit. In a letter to Colonel Folsom, she wrote: On the spot where 22 years ago you and I thought a house might stand for the home of a teacher. I am sitting alone by the open fire on the hearthstone . . . My chief desire now is to secure a teacher and I am baffled thus far on every hand. There is now a generation of young col'd teachers who began their education in this school or Miss Putnam's & ended with a yr. or 2 or 3 at Howard or Hampton. Today I summoned a young man just from a school in Washington. His English was faultless in sound and sentence & he had a certificate to teach a public sch. & supposed that he had engaged a place in Fairfield. What to do next does not appear. The young man began his school days in our institution. So you may infer from this parley about teachers that there has been growth of an enduring sort Not much building done - 4 framed houses with my own & four log structures I am now contracting to sell the last of the land excepting the lot surrounding this house. Contrast with the dead level ignorance when you and I walked about in this land. I realize that the rise and progress of Va. is well started.'

In 1890, Howland sold Beverly Taliaferro the tract of land adjoining the schoolhouse that he had been tending and living on for two decades. In 1897, Taliaferro's heirs sold the land back to Miss Howland. She then remodeled and enlarged the building so that it could be used as a dormitory for boarding students and as industrial-arts classroom. This building, pictured Photograph No. 2 of this report, was later used as a parsonage by First Baptist Church; it was demolished in the early 1970s following a period of disuse. By the 1880s and '90s, some of the students that Howland had sent North to be educated had returned home to Northumberland to teach in the school or to serve as teaching apprentices. These included Benjamin Taliaferro's daughter, Sidney; her sister Rebecca Taliaferro; her cousin Eliza J. Taliaferro (daughter of Beverly), Lucinda Green (daughter of Wesley Green); Joseph Walker, and Kate Howland Boyer. (Kate's sister, Susie Boyer Conley, taught at Stebbins School.) With these were young white teachers from the North, including (after Sarah Goodyear) a Miss Young, Rebecca Mason and Anna Stanton.

In the 1890s, Sidney Taliaferro returned to Northumberland with her husband Chester Boyer, after having taught school in Chestertown, Maryland for several years. Her brother-in-law, Joseph Boyer, and his wife, Amelia, also came to live and work at Arcadia. Joseph and Amelia lived in the industrial annex and looked after the boarding students. In addition, Amelia taught needlework skills to the female students. At that time most older students took courses in the industrial arts; these included shoemaking, basketry, millinery, weaving, and carpentry. Students in the industrial arts program were encouraged to market their products." During Howland's annual visits to Arcadia she attended classroom sessions, discussed school policy with the teachers, and took care of whatever repairs and improvements were needed at the schoolhouse, the industrial annex, or the cottage. On one of those annual visits, she invited a group of young white girls from the nearby village of Heathsville to her cottage for tea. While in Northumberland, Howland always traveled to Lottsburg to visit with her old friend Caroline Putnam, who continued running Holley School after Miss Holley's death in 1893. Although Howland had written as early as 1867 that "I intend this to be a public school ultimately . . .," it was fifty-four years before she took the steps to realize that goal.

In 1921, she turned over the management of Howland School to the Northumberland County public school system. The small schoolhouse and its parcel of land remained in the ownership of its board of trustees even though teachers were provided by the public school system. In 1921, Howland also sold the industrial annex with its tract to Joseph and Amelia Boyer for \$480. That same year, she gave the teacher's cottage and its fourteen-acre tract to Sidney Taliaferro Boyer and Sidney's husband, Chester Boyer. In 1926, Miss Howland, then aged ninety-eight, wrote her will. The will suggests that by then she had broken all ties to Howland School, having already made it independent of her support and influence. Although she made monetary bequests

totaling nearly a quarter-million dollars (nearly half of it went to a wide variety of schools and organizations in the South), she left none of her property to Howland School nor to any of the people there. Three years later, on June 29, 1929, Howland died at her home in New York. At her wish, her gravestone was inscribed with the words: "I STROVE TO REALIZE MYSELF AND TO SERVE."

When Howland School entered a new phase as a county public school in 1921, its first schoolboard-appointed teacher was Mrs. Sarah Buford Pope. Later teachers included Elsie Walker, Hilda Cuny, Mattie Parker, Cecila Carter, Emma Roane, Mrs. Bennett and Ollie Burnett, the last teacher. In 1958, the county closed Howland School and transferred its students to newer consolidated schools. After that, First Baptist Church--located just across the road--used Howland School for church social activities and adult education classes. By 1980, however, deterioration had rendered the building unfit for use. In 1986, the trustees of First Baptist Church of Heathsville petitioned the court for ownership of the school property, emphasizing that it was originally intended for use as a school and place of worship. Since First Baptist Church had maintained the property continuously since it had been used as a school, and since there were no other claims on the property, the court granted legal title to the church trustees. The members of First Baptist Church formed a building committee in 1986 to begin raising money for the school's restoration. The first phase of the project, making general repairs and stabilizing the foundations and walls, was completed in early 1989. Partly because so many local people and their relatives attended Howland School, the project has engendered widespread interest among the community at-large.

Howland Chapel School

Built two years after the end of the Civil War to serve the children of former slaves, Howland Chapel School is the oldest standing schoolhouse in Northumberland County and possibly the earliest public schoolhouse on the Northern Neck. The one-story frame building was erected by New York educator, reformer and philanthropist Emily Howland (1827-1929), after whom it was named. A plain rectangular frame structure with board-and-batten siding, Howland School is a rare and remarkably unaltered example of mid-nineteenth century vernacular architecture. Erected by local carpenters and laborers, the school was an unusually large and well-built structure completed at a time when most Virginia children--both Black and White-- attended school in cramped, cheaply built structures that seldom lasted more than a decade or two. Until 1921, when the Northumberland County school board took control of the property, Howland School was supported and maintained by Miss Howland and members of the local Black community. Continuously used as a schoolhouse from 1867 to 1958, and as a Baptist house of worship from 1867 to ca. 1920, Howland School is the focus of great community pride. Currently it is being restored to serve as a museum, community center and adult-education facility.

Howland Chapel School is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B and C at the Statewide level of significance with a Period of Significance dating from 1867-1939. Under Criterion B, the building is significant due to its association with Emily Howland during a formative period of her career as reformer and educator. Under Criterion C, it is architecturally significant as one of the very few little-altered Reconstruction Era schoolhouses in Virginia.

*RE: 1991 Howland Chapel School nomination: It is unclear what the POS end date of 1939 corresponds to -- the school is only listed under Criterion B and C in the areas of Architecture, Education, African American Ethnic Heritage, and Social History. Shouldn't we amend the nomination to include those under A and pin down that 1939 date? There isn't a statewide comparative analysis in the existing draft, so that should be considered, unless we are solely sticking to amendment in adding the school under the existing parameters and only adding updates to include the contributing resource. The school's new site is within the nominated 1.62-acre boundary, so no need to change there, but we will need to add Criteria Consideration B. The NR form will need to be update with the following, at minimum: revision of Contributing and Non-contributing resource

counts; Section 7 inventory; re-writing of Section 8 with the inclusion of possibly Criterion A, Criteria Consideration B for the move, statewide comparative analysis, etc.; new mapping; and photographs.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property, such as deeds, census and tax records, and/or published articles and books. (It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or family genealogies to this form.)

5. Property Ownership (Check as many categories as apply):

Private: X Public\Local _____ Public\State _____ Public\Federal _____

Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title: _____

organization: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: _____ telephone: _____

Legal Owner's Signature: _____

Date: _____

• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: _____

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title: Algeria Tate/Joanna McKnight (DHR)

organization: _____

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: algeria113@live.com telephone: _____

Date: 8/21/2024


PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH CONTINUATION SHEETS TO THIS FORM. THANK YOU!

LOCATION MAP


Howland Chapel School Nomination Update
Northumberland County
DHR No. 066-0110

 National Register Boundary

Teacher's Cottage (DHR No. 066-0098)

 Location at time of NR listing (1991)

 Current Location (moved 2008)

0 75 150 300
 Feet









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