

History of the land conveyances for the Oxford Community Center from 1844 to 2021.

Deeds:

The OCC property was originally part of a large estate belonging to the Chamberlaine family, and was known as Bonfield. [Genealogical notes of the Chamberlaine family of Maryland, (Eastern shore,) and of the following connected families: Neale-Lloyd, Tilghman Robins, Hollyday-Hammond-Dyer, Hughes-Stockton, Hayward, Nicols-Goldsborough, and others. ] It passed to James Lloyd Chamberlaine, who died in 1844, leaving the property to his wife, Anne Marie Chamberlaine. She died in 1852 and a partition action was filed in 1854 to divide the property among her heirs at law and devisees under her will.[Recited in deed from Rebecca Chamberlaine to Joseph E.M. Chamberlaine, dated March 22, 1873, recorded March 25, 1873, Book 79, page 45. Also see Genealogical notes of the Chamberlaine family of Maryland, (Eastern shore,) and of the following connected families: Neale-Lloyd, Tilghman Robins, Hollyday-Hammond-Dyer, Hughes-Stockton, Hayward, Nicols-Goldsborough, and others.]

The Bonfield land went to her eldest daughter, Rebecca Chamberlaine, who sold a major part of the land to Joseph E.M. Chamberlaine in 1873. [Deed, dated March 22, 1873, recorded March 25, 1873, Book 79, page 45.]

The land was next conveyed to C. Aubrey Cox on June 3rd, 1902 by Wm. H. Adkins and John C. Henry, who were executors of the estate of Joseph Chamberlaine and were appointed Trustees with the authority to sell the real estate related to a partition proceeding by the Circuit Court of Talbot County.[Deed, William H. Adkins and John C. Henry, Trustees to C. Aubrey Cox, Book 137, page 268].

On July 20, 1927 4.867 acres of land were conveyed by C. Aubrey Cox and his wife Myra Longfield Cox to the Talbot County Board of Education for a "Proposed New High School at Oxford, Maryland.[Deed recorded July 25, 1927. Book 211, page 26.] The property was first used as a high school, and then as an elementary school until all students were moved to schools in Easton and Trappe and the building was no longer used by the Board of Education.

On November 8, 1972 the Board of Education of Talbot County conveyed the property to the County Commissioners of Talbot County [Deed, Book 471, page 274 ]. The deed stated that the lands and premises were no longer needed for the educational purposes of the Board of Trustees of Talbot county and that the conveyance had the consent and approval of the State Superintendent of Schools. In a letter dated August 21, 1972 to Alford Carey, Jr., the Executive Director of the Public School Construction Program, the Superintendent of Schools. Norman J. Moore, explained that at the close of the 1970-71 school year all pupils were moved out of the Oxford Elementary School Building and were sent to Easton. The building was boarded up, but was still being used for storage by the Board of Education in 1973. [Letter dated February 7, 1973

from Norman J. Moore, Superintendent of Schools to Douglas Sullivan, President of the Board of County Commissioners, Talbot Co.]

Conveyance of School Building Agreement: On November 14, 1979, prior to Talbot County conveying the land and buildings to the Town of Oxford in 1982, Talbot County conveyed its interest in the school building, but not in the land, to the Town of Oxford. Oxford agreed to demolish the building within one year and to “restore the land on which it rests to a grassy condition.” The County agreed to use the property, which was about 1.557 acres, as a part of the County Parks and Recreation Program. The County agreed that it would use the property as part of an athletic field and would not remove the property from the Parks and Recreation Program without first obtaining written consent from the Town of Oxford. Signed by Richmond W. Hill, President, Talbot County Council and Emory L. Balderson, President, Commissioners of Oxford.

On May 25, 1982 Talbot County Maryland conveyed the land and buildings to the Town of Oxford. [Deed, recorded June 4, 1982 Book 564, page 619] The conveyance was subject to two restrictions: A provision that the property would revert back to Talbot County should the Town of Oxford “cease to use this property for public purposes.” And subject to an unrecorded 99 year “Lease Agreement and Supplement To Lease Agreement dated November 25, 1980 between Talbot County, Maryland, Lessor, Town of Oxford, Lessee, and Oxford Community Center, Inc., Subleasee.”

#### Leases:

November 25, 1980 lease and sublease. After the November 14, 1979 agreement a group of citizens petitioned the Town of Oxford Commissioners requesting that the building become a community center rather than being demolished. In negotiating this new arrangement, the Town of Oxford Commissioners had requested that the County lease the property directly to the Oxford Community Center, Inc.. According to a letter dated October 11, 1980 from attorney David R. Thompson to the Oxford Commissioners, the Talbot County Council “took the position that the Commissioners of Oxford should deal with the people of Oxford rather than the Talbot County Council dealing with the people of Oxford.” Hence that Lease Agreement dated November 25, 1980 was between Talbot County, lessor, and the Town of Oxford, lessee, but permitted Oxford to sublease the property to the Oxford Community Center, Inc. The lease was for a period of 99 years and was for the land and buildings. Rent was for one dollar per year. The lease would terminate if the building ceased to be used as a community center or for municipal purposes of the Town of Oxford. The same document also included the Sublease between Oxford and the Oxford Community Center, Inc. Additional terms of the sublease required the Community Center to restore the premises and allowed it to make improvements and alternations. It also was responsible for utility expenses and was required to maintain general and liability insurance. The Center was also allowed to sublet portions of the facility. Signed by Herbert L. Andrew, III, President, Talbot County Council (Lessor); James R.M. Farmar,

President, Commissioners of Oxford (Lessee); Norman W. Harrington, Oxford Community Center, Inc. (Sublessee). [Copy of lease, OCC files]

When Talbot County conveyed the land and buildings to the Town of Oxford on May 25, 1982, the deed recited that that conveyance was subject to the November 25, 1980 lease. This is somewhat confusing because the Town of Oxford at that point was the owner of the land and buildings and hence would be the lessor not the lessee.