

# DORCHESTER COUNTY

## HEART OF THE CHESAPEAKE



HERITAGE TRAILS



## Side Trips off Route 50

Explore the heart of  
Maryland's Eastern Shore,  
just minutes from the highway





Dairy cattle head home for milking at a farm near East New Market in this 1941 photo.

PHOTO COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

# Welcome. The Heart of the Chesapeake

While it shares an overall history and culture with the rest of Maryland's Eastern Shore, Dorchester possesses a sense of place and character all its own, as noted by such writers as James Michener, H.L. Mencken and Dorchester native son John Barth. To experience true "Shorenness," nothing surpasses Dorchester, which was established as a county in 1669. The area offers a distinctively rich culture with numerous places where you can explore and absorb

the heritage that helps make us the Heart of Chesapeake Country. In this Heritage Trails brochure, we've compiled interesting side trips just minutes from Route 50 that will bring you through historic towns, the heart of farming country, and beautiful vistas. Along the way, you'll find some great destinations, from paddle-wheeler cruises to a world-class wildlife refuge to a family-friendly winery. Spend the day exploring or choose one spot that catches your interest.





Dorchester  
Visitor Center

## ★ Dorchester Visitor Center

2 Rose Hill Pl., 410.228.1000, [TourDorchester.org](http://TourDorchester.org)

Start your exploration at the Visitor Center.

With its sail soaring 100 feet in the air, the Dorchester County Visitor Center is easy to find. Come for information about the area. You'll gain a good introduction to the county, its people, and its history by browsing the exhibits in the lower level of the Visitor Center. The exhibits share stories of local life, agriculture, seafood, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, natural resources, and more. The Visitor Center also has restrooms, a playground overlooking the river, and a boardwalk.

Open daily, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. at 2 Rose Hill Place in Cambridge, near the Malkus Bridge over the Choptank River. Also visit us at [TourDorchester.org](http://TourDorchester.org) for hotel and restaurant listings, museums, events, and more.



### SIDE TRIP #1

## Blackwater and Bucktown

Wildlife refuge and African-American history



Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

**INTRO:** About 12 miles south of Route 50, you'll find yourself in the midst of one of the country's most magnificent wildlife refuges. Along the way, dip into some compelling African-American history.

## 1 Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway

2 Rose Hill Pl., Cambridge, 800.522.8687  
[harriettubmanbyway.org](http://harriettubmanbyway.org)



Underground Railroad "conductor" Harriet Tubman was born in Dorchester County. The best way to explore her life in the area is to follow the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, a scenic driving tour. The

route winds its way through places Tubman lived and routes of escape. The Byway includes the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument, designated by President Barack Obama in 2013. The

## SIDE TRIP #1: BLACKWATER AND BUCKTOWN

monument, created from land in the Blackwater Refuge and adjacent property, includes tracts where Tubman lived and worked as a slave.

Find out more about the self-guided driving tour at the Dorchester County Visitor Center in Cambridge or at the Blackwater Visitor Center. Download the free audio guide and view the route at [HarrietTubmanByway.org](http://HarrietTubmanByway.org).

**GETTING THERE:** From Route 50 heading east, take the first light after the Malkus Bridge (over the Choptank River), turning right on Maryland Avenue. Take the first right onto Dorchester Avenue and follow the signs.

## 2 Stanley Institute and Christ Rock Church

*Bayly Avenue and Route 16, Cambridge, 410.228.6657*

On the way to the refuge, you'll come to an intersection full of African-American history. Stanley Institute, a one-room school-house, was moved to this location in 1867 by African Americans determined to educate their children after the Civil War. The mustard yellow building served the community until



### RECREATION ALONG THE TRAIL



Dorchester County is full of world-class recreation opportunities. The quiet roads are perfect for cycling. The many waterways are great for paddling, sailing, cruising, and fishing. Find out more at [TourDorchester.org](http://TourDorchester.org).

it was closed in 1966. Today it stands restored and maintained by former students and local residents. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Open by appointment; call 410.228.6657.

One of Dorchester's oldest black congregations met at Stanley Institute in the late 1800s before moving across the street, where their Christ Rock Church is currently being restored.

**GETTING THERE:** From Route 50 in Cambridge, head south on Church Creek Road (Route 16) for 3.2 miles until you reach the intersection of Route 16, Dailsville Road, and Rock Drive. Parking on Bayly Road.

## 3 Emily's Produce

*2206 Church Creek Rd., Cambridge, 443.521.0789, [emilysproduce.com](http://emilysproduce.com)*

This family-owned farm market is all about the rich flavors, vibrant colors, and down-home goodness of life on the Eastern Shore. The market offers locally grown fruits and vegetables, bedding plants, hanging baskets, baked goods, and other food items produced in the area, as well as children's activities. U-Pick produce is available seasonally. Open April through November.

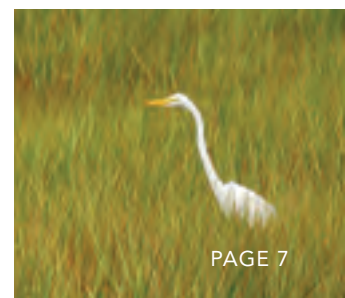
**GETTING THERE:** From Stanley Institute, continue on Church Creek Road (Route 16) for 2.1 miles. On the right.



## 4 Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

*2145 Key Wallace Dr., Cambridge, 410.228.2677, [fws.gov/blackwater](http://fws.gov/blackwater)*

In the midst of the 27,000-acre Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, experience nature's glory up close. The marshy edges where land and water meet host thousands of



## SIDE TRIP #1: BLACKWATER AND BUCKTOWN

migrating birds and waterfowl each year and are home to bald eagles, sika deer, and the endangered Delmarva fox squirrel. The refuge has a visitor center with exhibits and displays, including telescopes for wildlife viewing.

**GETTING THERE:** From Emily's Produce, continue southwest on Route 16 for two miles. Turn left on Route 335 (Golden Hill Road) and continue for 3.9 miles. Turn left on Key Wallace Drive. After 0.8 miles, the Blackwater Visitor Center is on your right.

## 5 Nause-Waiwash Longhouse

Maple Dam Road and Greenbrier Road, Cambridge, 410.376.3889, [turtletracks.org](http://turtletracks.org)

The Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians includes 250 members who are descended from the original Nanticoke. The group acquired this once-abandoned church built in the late 1800s with the help of Indian descendants, who also attended services here. Tribal leaders turned the structure into a traditional "longhouse," or gathering place for meetings and other functions. Unless advertised, the building is not open to the general public.



**GETTING THERE:** From Blackwater, continue east on Key Wallace Drive. After 1.9 miles, turn left on Maple Dam Road. Continue 0.4 miles until Greenbrier Road.

## 6 Brodess Farm Marker

Greenbrier Road near Bucktown Road, Cambridge

Edward Brodess moved Harriet Tubman's mother and her children to his farm here around 1823. Tubman spent her early years here and on nearby farms. No trace remains of Brodess's home that once sat at the end of the lane, but there are historic markers. NOTE: This land is private property. Please respect the owner's privacy.

**GETTING THERE:** From the longhouse, continue on Greenbrier Road about 1.5 miles. Marker is on right before you reach Bucktown Road.

## 7 Bucktown Village Store

4303 Bucktown Rd., Cambridge, 410.901.9255, [blackwaterpaddleandpedal.com](http://blackwaterpaddleandpedal.com)



Born into slavery, Harriet Tubman—the woman later called the "Moses of her people" for her role in rescuing slaves through the Underground Railroad—suffered a serious head injury at the hands of a white overseer at this site. Today, this restored general store is open by appointment. The owners also lead Underground Railroad tours (and general tours) by kayak or bicycle—and rent the gear as needed.

**GETTING THERE:** From the historic marker, continue on Greenbrier Road for about 1 mile. The store is at the intersection of Greenbrier and Bucktown Roads.

## 8 Decoursey Bridge

Decoursey Bridge Road, Cambridge

The Decoursey Bridge that crosses the scenic Green Briar Swamp may be small and unobtrusive by day, but at night it can turn decidedly spooky.

Centuries ago, the legend goes, a plantation owner had a slave help him stash away treasure in a burial vault in the marshland. To keep her from revealing the hiding place to anyone, the plantation owner cut off her head with his sword and buried her body with the treasure. Today some report seeing the ghost of the woman, now known as Big Liz, at this bridge. To call to Big Liz, locals drive to the bridge, sound the horn six times, and flash the headlights three times. She is said to appear carrying her head in her hands.



**GETTING THERE:** From Bucktown Village Store, turn right out of the driveway. Take first right on Decoursey Bridge Road.



## 9 Layton's Chance Vineyard and Winery

4225 New Bridge Rd., Vienna, 410.228.1205,  
laytonschance.com



The Layton family has been farming in Dorchester County for several generations. Over the years they have raised cattle and tomatoes; today they grow corn, soybeans, wheat—and grapes.

The family-friendly winery offers several varieties of wines and hosts many special events and festivals. Stop by for daily tastings and tours of both the vineyard and the farm, a walk on the nature trail, or a picnic. Layton's Chance welcomes groups and private parties.

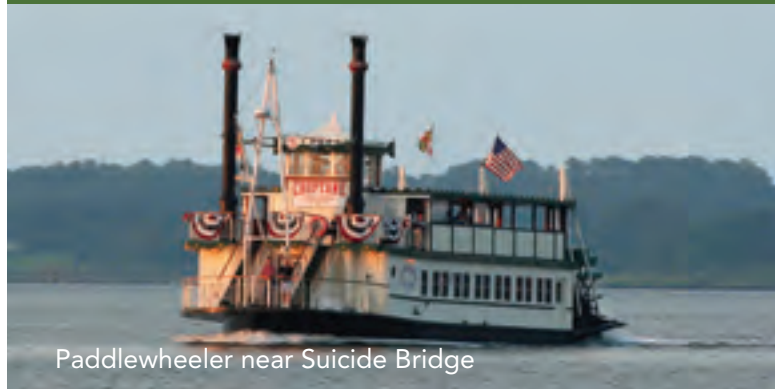
**GETTING THERE:** From Decoursey Bridge, continue on Decoursey Bridge Road until you reach the T stop. Turn right on Drawbridge Road, then make an immediate left on Ravenwood Road. Take your first right onto New Bridge Road. Winery is on the right.



**RETURNING TO ROUTE 50:** From the winery driveway, turn left on New Bridge Road. Turn right on Ravenwood Road. After 1.9 miles, turn left on Salem Road. After 0.6 miles you'll reach Route 50.

## East New Market and Area

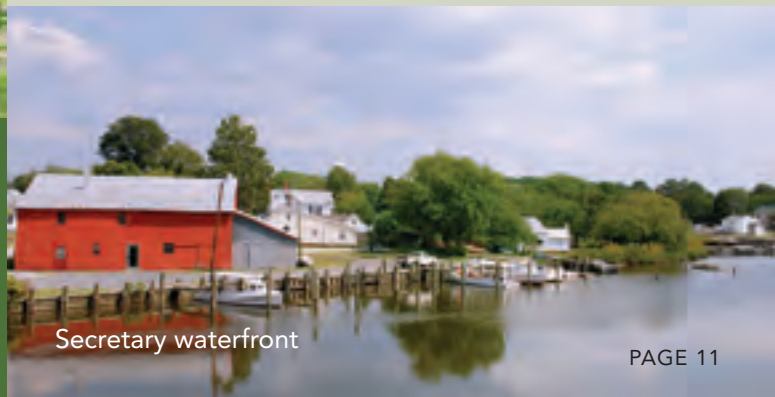
Historic churches and homes, paddlewheelers



Paddlewheeler near Suicide Bridge

**INTRO:** East New Market's roots go back to 1790, when it was a village known as New Market; it was officially incorporated in 1832. The town's historic district is on the National Register of Historic Places; most structures listed were built in the mid-1700s to 1900. East New Market was the birthplace of Thomas Holliday Hicks, who began his political career here before going on to become governor of Maryland and helping to keep the state in the Union during the Civil War. For more about East New Market, pick up the self-guided walking tour brochure at the Dorchester Visitor Center.

Less than two miles away from East New Market is the town of Secretary. In the early 1900s, this little port town on the Warwick River was so busy loading steamboats with farm goods that it shipped more Eastern Shore produce to Baltimore than any other place on the Delmarva Peninsula. The town, incorporated in 1900, was named for Henry Sewall of London, Secretary of the province in the 1660s.



Secretary waterfront

## 1 Friendship Hall

15 Railroad Ave., East New Market



This Georgian-style brick dwelling dates to 1790. It was built by the locally prominent Sulivane family, who first came to Maryland in 1695. Three generations of the Sulfivanes served in

the Maryland General Assembly. The home is privately owned, but the 10 acres surrounding the home have been purchased by the Town of East New Market, and plans are to turn it into a community park.

**GETTING THERE:** From Cambridge, head east on Route 50 for about 3 miles. Turn left on Route 16 North (Mt. Holly-East New Market Road). Continue for 4.8 miles. Turn left to continue on Route 16 North for 0.5 miles. Make a slight left onto Main St./Route 16. Take first right onto Railroad Ave./Route 14. On the right.

## 2 Trading Post

10 Academy St., East New Market

East New Market was established as a trading center in what was a thickly wooded outback in the middle 1600s. Historians agree that settlers likely built stores near the reservations to facilitate commerce between Indians and

Europeans, but cannot verify local legend that the Trading Post in East New Market was such a place. Research concludes that the structure was built in the early 1800s—years after most Indians had left the Choptank River area—and was not frequented by Native Americans. Nevertheless, the single-story Trading Post probably resembles buildings that did serve as common meeting places among Indians and colonists. The building has been moved twice and restored.



**GETTING THERE:** From Friendship Hall, head northwest on Railroad Avenue. Pass intersection with Main Street. Railroad Avenue changes its name to Academy Street. Trading Post is on the left.

## 3 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

116 Main St., East New Market

Each of the four entrances to East New Market features a church. One of them, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church on the northern branch of Main Street, was built in 1893, replacing an earlier building located in another part of town and razed in 1892. St. Stephen's is painted gray and is valued as an example of Romanesque Revival architecture.

**GETTING THERE:** From the Trading Post, turn around on Academy Street. Take first left onto Main Street/Route 16. Church is on the left.



### NEW LIFE FOR OLD SCHOOL

For small towns like East New Market, being able to adapt vacant buildings to new purposes helps reduce the carbon footprint while preserving local architectural history. The former East New Market High School, built in 1912 and closed in 1970, was re-imagined as a senior citizen apartment complex in 1999. The renovation of the building, at 40 Academy St., preserved the exterior and modernized the interior.



## 4 Riverboat Cruises and Suicide Bridge Restaurant

6304 Suicide Bridge Rd., Hurlock, 410.943.4689,  
suicide-bridge-restaurant.com

Riverboat cruises on the Choptank River begin at the Suicide Bridge Restaurant north of Secretary on two replicas of turn-of-the-century paddle-



wheelers, the *Dorothy Megan* and the *Choptank River Queen*. A variety of cruises are offered, including lunch, dinner, crab feast, and sightseeing trips. The restaurant, famed for its crab dishes, gets its unusual name from the bridge over nearby Cabin Creek, which local legend claims has been the site of three suicides since 1888.

**GETTING THERE:** From St. Stephen's Church, head south on Main Street in Secretary for .08 mile. Take the first right onto Academy Street/Route 14. Continue for 1.4 miles. Turn right on Poplar Street. Poplar Street becomes Suicide Bridge Road. Continue for 1.7 miles. Restaurant is on left.

### EATERIES

Hungry? Stop for a break at any of these businesses: The Warwick River Cafe, 147 Main Street St., Secretary; Springdale Market, 5703 Mt. Holly Rd., East New Market; or Hometown Pride Market and Deli, 104 Main St., East New Market. (Don't miss the fried chicken!)

### RAILROADING HERITAGE



Because of its excellent railroad facilities that carried passengers and products to major destinations in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the nearby town of Hurlock became the industrial and commercial hub of the northern part of Dorchester County. The town, located about five miles north-east of East New Market, refurbished the train station using a design based on the first station built in Hurlock in 1867. Visitors are invited to join the one-hour train rides to Federalsburg that happen each year during the Hurlock Fall Festival.

### STAY OVERNIGHT:

Extend your explorations by making it more than a day trip. There are several hotels along Route 50 in Cambridge, from reasonably priced national hotel chains to a four-diamond waterfront resort. There are also bed and breakfasts throughout the county, as well as a campground and vacation rentals. Browse the options at [TourDorchester.org](http://TourDorchester.org).





## 5 S.B. Farms

7010 Hynson Rd., Hurlock, 410.754.5821,  
sbfarmsinc.com

The bison, or American buffalo, was the most important animal on the American plains and prairies, and was made nearly extinct by overhunting. The Edwards family brought



bison farming to Dorchester County. The bison are raised without the use of antibiotics, growth stimulants, or hormones. The farm sells bison products and offers tours for groups, using a professionally built tour wagon for safety. Tours require a minimum of 10 people; by appointment only.

**GETTING THERE:** From Suicide Bridge Restaurant, head north on Suicide Bridge Road for 1.8 miles. Turn left on Cabin Creek Road. Make an immediate right toward Route 16/East New Market Road, then turn left onto Route 16. Continue for 4.1 miles. Turn right on Route 318 East/Preston Road. After 1.1 miles, turn right on Williamsburg Church Road. Go 1.7 miles and turn left on Hynson Road. Farm is on the left.



**RETURNING TO ROUTE 50:** The bison farm is about 17.4 miles from Route 50. From the farm, go southwest on Hynson Road for 0.5 miles. Turn left on Williamsburg Church Road. After 1.9 miles, turn right on Route 307/Williamsburg Road. Follow for 2.5 miles. Turn left on North Main Street/Route 331. Take the first right onto Poplar Street. After 0.6 miles, turn right onto Route 392/East New Market Hurlock Road. Continue for 4.4 miles. Stay straight to go onto Route 16/Mount Holly-East New Market Road. Follow for 7.4 miles until you reach Route 50.

## Vienna and Area

Small waterfront town, big history



**INTRO:** Vienna, first explored by Captain John Smith in 1608, is one of the oldest colonial settlements in the country. Small as it is (currently home to some 275 residents), the waterfront town of Vienna has had a major role in the history of Dorchester County. Its strategic location on the Nanticoke River was so important that the Maryland Assembly designated Vienna a Port of Entry in 1762. British vessels raided the town at least five times during the Revolutionary War and returned in the War of 1812.

For a more detailed description and a self-guided walking tour of Vienna, pick up the free brochure at the Dorchester Visitor Center.

### THE COUNTRY GREETING

Accept the friendly one-finger greeting. As you drive or cycle the county's many back roads, don't be surprised if an oncoming motorist raises an index finger from the steering wheel. That little gesture—or sometimes a simple nodding of the head—is the driver's way of saying hello. Feel free to return the salutation.

## 1 Breckenridge Adventures

4032 Mill Rd., Vienna, 443.521.9588, [shoremaze.com](http://shoremaze.com)



Breckenridge Adventures was once part of a larger farm that is still in operation. Breckenridge offers all kinds of adventures, including a nine-acre corn maze in the fall and paint ball fields all year long. They host birthday parties, family reunions, and corporate

outings with lots of outdoor fun.

**GETTING THERE:** From Cambridge, head east on Route 50 for about 8 miles. Farm is on the westbound side of the highway. Turn left onto Mill Road; farm is on the right.

## 2 Vienna Heritage Museum

303 Race St., Vienna, 410.376.3827

The museum is housed in a former service station and confectionary shop. This one-room museum displays items representing the town's long history, including



Native American artifacts collected nearby. One of the most interesting exhibits is a pearl button machine used at a button factory on nearby Elliotts Island until 1999. The museum is open by appointment; call 410.376.3827.

**GETTING THERE:** From Breckenridge Adventures, continue east on Route 50 for 4.5 miles. Take the Vienna exit, making a slight right onto Route 731/Old U.S. 50. Follow for 1.3 miles. Turn right onto Gay Street. Make the first left onto Race Street. Museum is on the left. Parking on the street.

## 3 Vienna Waterfront Park and Historic Markers

Water and Race Streets, Vienna



Emperor's Landing is Vienna's waterfront park on the Nanticoke River. It includes a series of historic markers that

share the story of Captain John Smith, whose voyage up the river in 1608 brought him in contact with Nanticoke Indians near current-day Vienna. Vienna is host to the annual Native American Festival, a two-day gathering of Indian descendants who demonstrate traditional dancing, singing, drumming, tomahawk throwing, and arts and crafts each fall.

**GETTING THERE:** From the Vienna Heritage Museum, continue on Race Street, then turn right onto Water Street. Parking on street.

## 4 Historic Churches of Vienna

The **Vienna United Methodist Church** (206 Church St.), built in 1901, served as the Methodist Protestant Church until 1968 when the Methodist Episcopal and the Methodist Protestant churches combined. Across the street is **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** (203 Church St.), designed by New York architect W. Harley Wood and constructed in 1892 by James Robertson, a Cambridge contractor. Like doors to many county churches, the arched entrance is painted bright red.



For more on these churches, pick up the Vienna self-guided walking tour brochure at the Dorchester Visitor Center.





## 5 Handsell and Indiantown Road

4835 Indiantown Rd., Vienna, 410.228.8981,  
[restorehandsell.org](http://restorehandsell.org)

Today's Indiantown Road, linking Vienna and Brookview, follows a winding, nearly pristine path through the middle of what was once the Chicone reservation, which dissolved in the late 1700s when most Indians left the area. The route is designated as a Maryland Scenic Byway and offers landscape views little changed over the centuries.

Handsell, an 18th-century brick house, sits on land that was part of the Indian reservation. The structure is an early reminder of how settlers quickly moved onto land once set aside exclusively for Indians. Rebuilt during the 1800s after a devastating fire, Handsell's interior is untouched from that period. The house has never been electrified or plumbed and the woodwork never repainted.

The building is undergoing restoration by the Nanticoke Historic Preservation Alliance, Inc., and is open for group tours or by appointment. Visitors are welcome anytime to browse the historic markers on the property. An example of a Native American longhouse has been built on the grounds using traditional methods.

**GETTING THERE:** From Vienna, follow Route 331 heading north. Turn right onto Indiantown Road and cross Chicone Creek. Handsell is on the right at the edge of a field.

## 6 Reid's Grove Country Store and Reid's Grove United Methodist Church

Store: 5106 Rhodesdale Vienna Rd., 410.943.1212;  
 Church: 5076 Reid's Grove Rd., Rhodesdale,  
 410.376.0160

Take a step back in time at this country store, which was the center of community life for much of the 1900s. In 1987, it closed for more than 20 years before being reopened by descendants of the original owners. In keeping with family tradition, owners Tom and Donna Bradshaw keep the store as close to the building's original look as possible. Just like in the days of old, you can stop in for grocery items, as well as fresh sandwiches, grilled items, and baked goods.



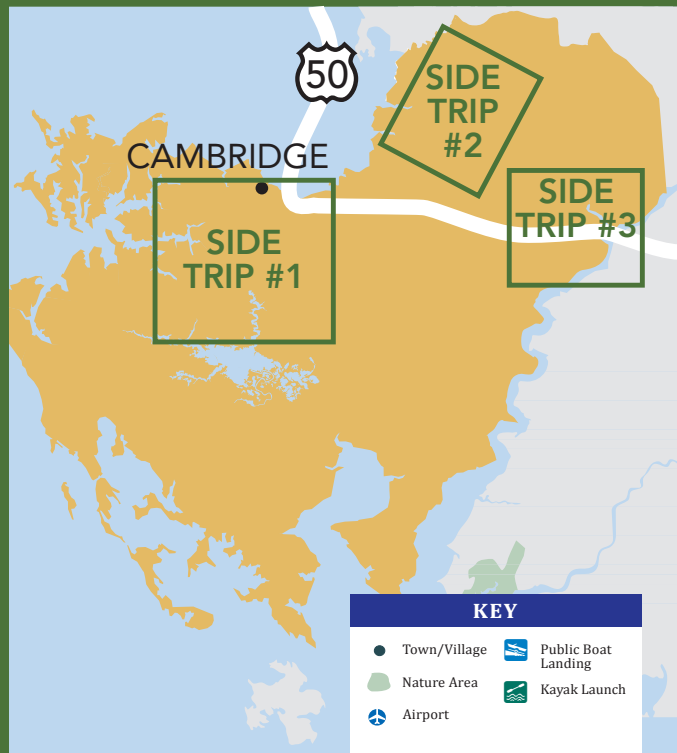
A few hundred yards south of the store on Reid's Grove Road is Reid's Grove United Methodist Church. This attractive rural church was erected in 1900 to serve the farm families of the area. A steeple was added in the late 1900s and the double doors were painted a deep burgundy. Some graves in the adjacent cemetery predate the building.

**GETTING THERE:** From Handsell, continue northeast on Indiantown Road. Make your first left onto Reid Road. Stay on the paved road as it bears right, then left. After 2.1 miles, turn right onto Route 331/Rhodesdale Vienna Road. Store is immediately on the left. To reach the church, head south on Rhodesdale Vienna Road. The church is at the intersection with Maiden Forest Road.



**RETURNING TO ROUTE 50:** From Reid's Grove Church, head south on Route 331/Rhodesdale Vienna Road. Continue about 2.6 miles until you reach Route 50.

# MAPS



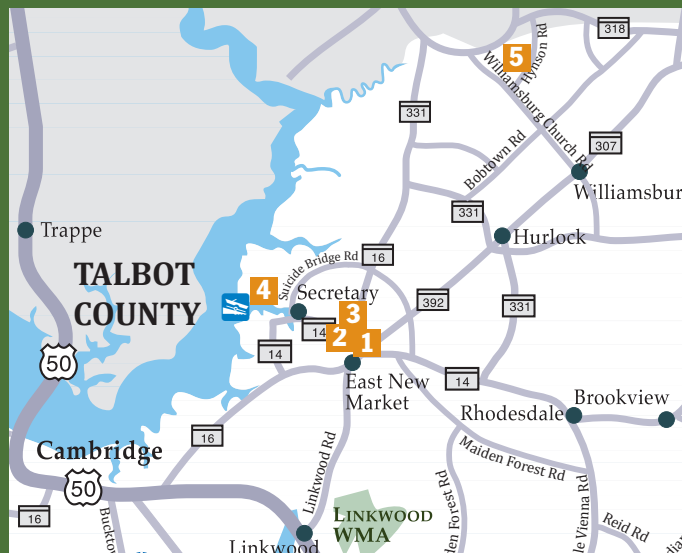
## SIDE TRIP #1



### BLACKWATER AND BUCKTOWN

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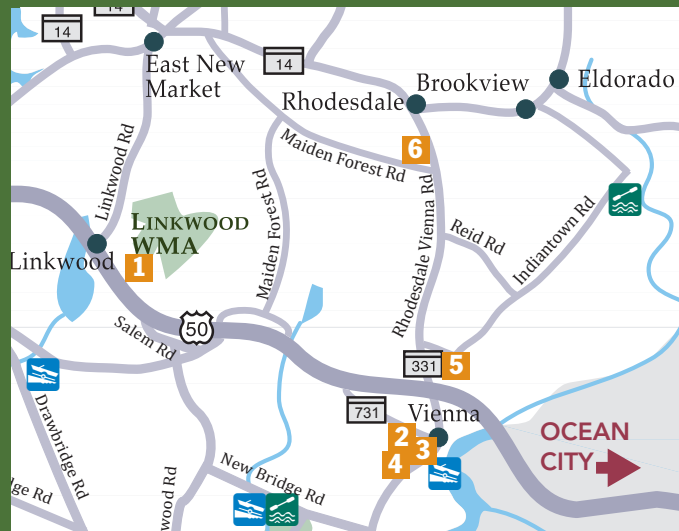
## SIDE TRIP #2



### EAST NEW MARKET AND AREA

- 1 Friendship Hall
- 2 Trading Post
- 3 St. Stephen's Church
- 4 Riverboats/Suicide Bridge
- 5 S.B. Farms

## SIDE TRIP #3



### VIENNA AND AREA

- 1 Breckenridge Adventures
- 2 Vienna Heritage Museum
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- 4 Historic Churches of Vienna
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- 6 Reid's Grove Store and Reid's Grove Church

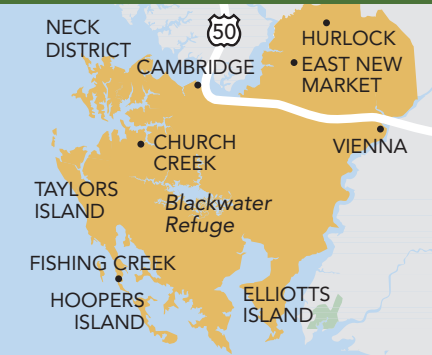


A young tomato picker on a Dorchester County farm waits for a truck loaded with bushels to leave for the cannery in this 1941 photo.



PHOTO COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

## DORCHESTER COUNTY



### MORE HERITAGE

**TRAILS:** Don't miss the other Heritage Trails brochures: "Cambridge" and "Waterfront Villages." Pick them up at the Visitor Center in Cambridge.



## Heart of the Chesapeake Country Heritage Area

2 Rose Hill Place

Cambridge, MD 21613

410.228.1000 or 800.522.TOUR

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

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