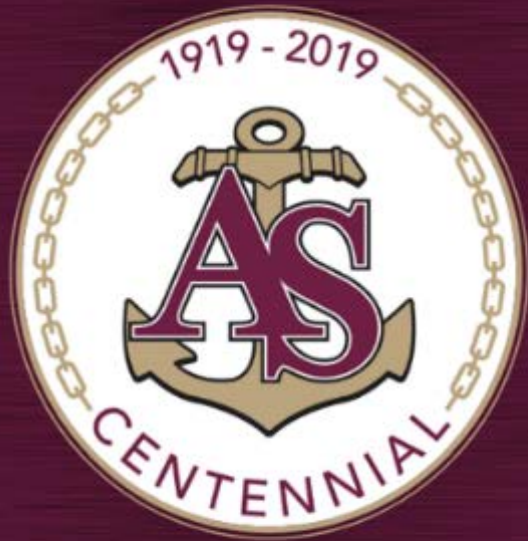


The Apprentice School
Celebrating a Century



William A. Fox

Available
at The
Apprentice
School
store

\$30

This book is dedicated to Mike and Nancy Petters, who have done so much for The Apprentice School, the Company, the Community, and the Nation.

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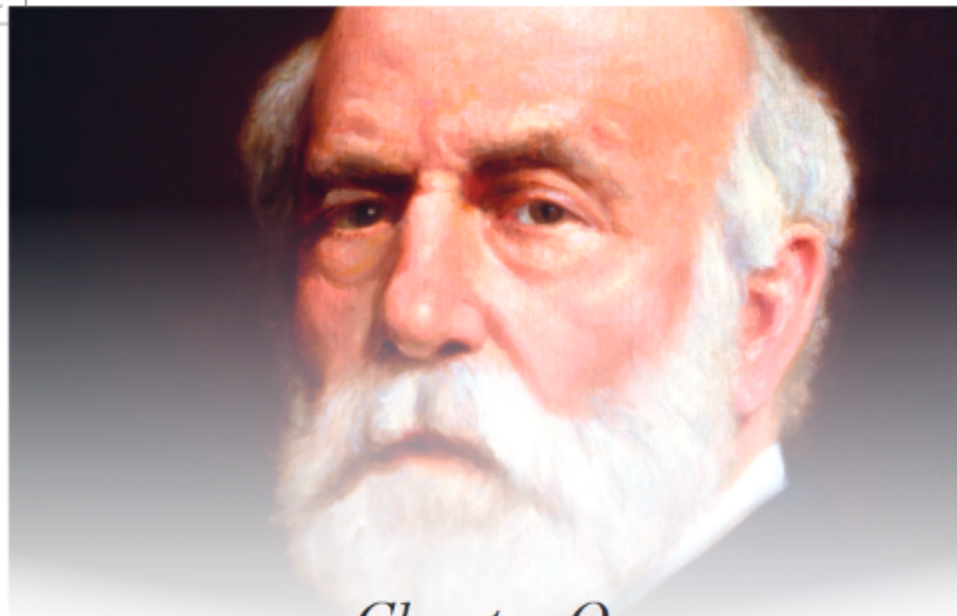
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Chapter One

Beginnings: 1886 – 1918

The Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company (NNS) was founded by railroad magnate and industrialist Collis Potter Huntington (1821–1900) in 1886 as the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company. Extending his Chesapeake and Ohio Railway to Newport News in 1881, he founded a major port, railroad complex, and city there. As a boy peddler in the 1840s, he had visited the area and later pronounced it ideally situated for future development. As the port and city were built, he realized that a large shipyard would be an asset. Its first dry dock opened in 1889, and its first two hulls, the tugs *Dorothy* and *El Toro*, were delivered in 1891. Following these, the large cargo steamers *El Sud* and *El Norte* were delivered to the Morgan Line in 1892, establishing the new shipyard's reputation for building good ships. In 1894, the Yard was awarded contracts for three naval gunboats, and by the end of 1899, it had delivered six tugs, nine cargo ships, five passenger ships, three gunboats, and two battleships to commercial customers and the US Navy. Before 1886, there had been virtually no industry in the farming settlement at Newport News, and no shipbuilders. In addition to building a great shipyard plant, the founders had to build a skilled work force to build good ships. At first, an informal "over the shoulder" method was employed, using a few experienced craftsmen to train farm boys and others to build ships. This evolved into an apprentice program by 1890, then into a formal Apprentice School in 1919.



By 1889, the Shipyard's "over the shoulder" training was formalized into a four-year program. The first Apprentice, Henry Clark, was enrolled that September, but he did not complete the course. The second to enroll was John Dominick Nicholas, who completed the course in 1896. On April 4, 1894, machinist Norwood Jones, the third to enroll, was the first to complete the four-year course and receive an Apprentice certificate. A native of Hampton, he began his apprenticeship in 1890. Thereafter, he was always known as the first Apprentice.

Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co.

Newport News Va. April 26, '94

To Whom It May Concern :-

This is to certify that the bearer, Mr. Norwood Jones, has served an apprenticeship of four years in the machine shop of the Newport News Shipbuilding & Dry Dock Co., during which time we have found him an industrious and faithful apprentice, and we can now recommend him as a machinist.

Yours truly

Samuel W. Smith
Gen'l Sup't

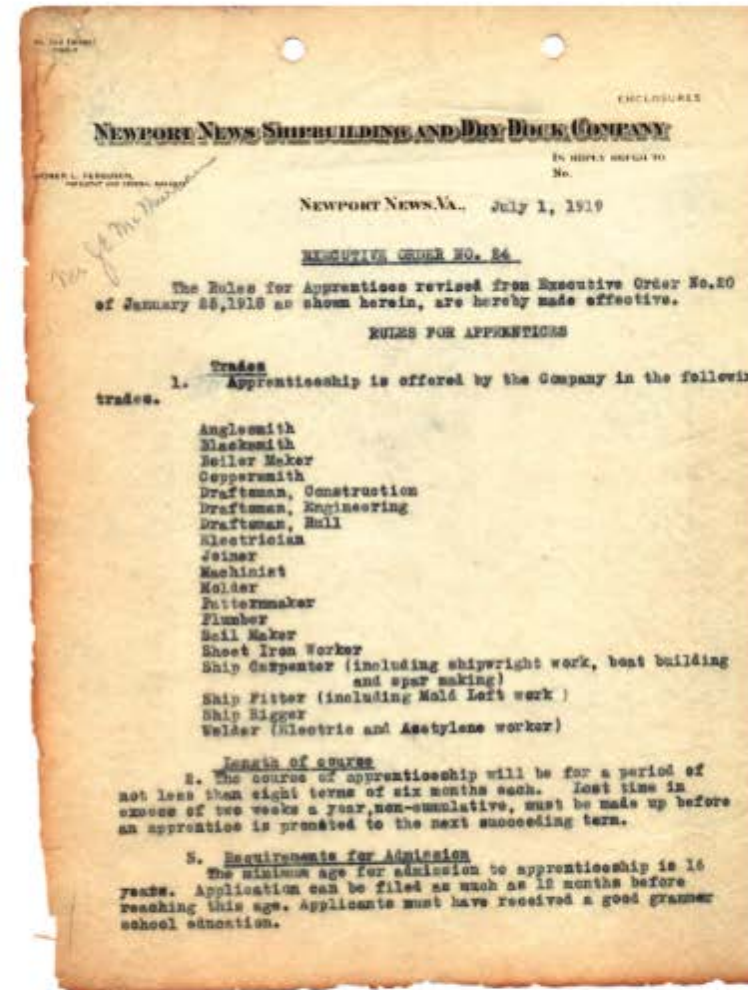
This certificate was awarded to Norwood Jones at the completion of his apprenticeship. He worked for the Company for about two and a half years afterward and later joined the Hampton Fire Department, becoming its chief engineer for fifty years. Since he completed his apprenticeship 25 years before the founding of The Apprentice School in 1919, his and the School's anniversaries were always celebrated together. In particular, he returned in 1944, toured the plant and the School, and was honored at its 25th Anniversary program. Norwood Jones died in Richmond on January 11, 1962, at age 88.



Chapter Two

Founding the School: 1919

In the fall of 1918, the Apprentices were unsettled. Earlier that year, a government agency, the Macy Board, had awarded a retroactive pay raise to all workers doing government work. All employees of Newport News Shipbuilding received this award except for the Apprentices, who became very angry. Also, they were working nine hours per day for between nine and 12 cents per hour, and they were not paid for attending the Night School. At a mass meeting at the Daniels School, the majority favored going on strike. Cooler heads prevailed when Apprentice Joseph Carvil (Construction Draftsman, 1919) proposed that a committee be formed to discuss the grievances, to propose a plan to better organize the Apprentice program, and to obtain decent, living wages. In effect, the Apprentice Association was formed that night, with Carvil as its first president. After considerable study, the committee requested a meeting with Homer L. Ferguson, the president and general manager of the Shipyard. They proposed the establishment of an apprentice school on Company property, during working hours, similar to the program at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. Mr. Ferguson agreed, and Executive Order No. 24, establishing the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company Apprentice School, was issued on July 1, 1919. That day is considered to be the birthdate of The Apprentice School. To make things even better, the Apprentices received a retroactive pay raise of about \$25, which was a large sum in 1919. Mr. Ferguson took a special interest in the Apprentices and the School until his retirement in 1946, and he was and is considered to be the "Father of The Apprentice School."



This is a scan of the original of Executive Order No. 24, found in Apprentice School archives. Now almost a century old, it is a thoroughly thought-out and well-written document. As shown, it revised the Apprentice Rules of January 25, 1918. A total of 19 trades were offered in 1919. Over the years, some of these have disappeared and have been replaced by new ones. The length of the course was set at four years, and the minimum age for admission was set at 16 years.



The Apprentice School's leadership team leverages extensive experience in the shipbuilding industry and higher education to coordinate the preeminent registered apprenticeship program in the nation. The team's commitment to developing future industry leaders is realized through the rigorous academics, trade-related course work, and strategically timed on-the-job training offered by The Apprentice School, resulting in alumni who possess an eye for innovation and a steadfast commitment to first-time quality.

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Director of Education

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Class 1987

Alicia Uzzle, PhD
Manager, Admissions, Academics and Student Services

Michael W. Allen
Manager, Athletics



Eighty-six years ago, the school introduced the role of craft instructor to help Apprentices develop the core leadership principles and craftsmanship necessary for a successful shipbuilding career. Today, almost 70 craft instructors ensure that Apprentices receive the training and the types of jobs they need to develop targeted skill sets, document the Apprentices' skills development, and provide them with regular and consistent evaluations. The Apprentice School's 14 academic instructors deliver the courses in business, communications, drafting, mathematics, physics, and ship construction. Academic instructors create classroom experiences to prepare Apprentices for work in their shipbuilding trades, to continue their education in one of the School's advanced programs, and to further their education through Newport News Shipbuilding's Educational Assistance Program. The faculty is shown here at the time of the February 23, 2019, commencement exercises.

The Apprentice School's Centennial Celebration in 2019 promises to be a memorable series of events, with Monday, July 1, as Centennial Day. This will commemorate the 100th anniversary of Homer L. Ferguson's Executive Order No. 24, which formally established the School on July 1, 1919. A 100th Anniversary historical calendar, a catalog of Centennial products, and a new Centennial webpage will appear in January. The 100th class, that of 2018, will graduate in February, and the AAA Annual Banquet in April will commemorate the 125th anniversary of the first graduate, Norwood Jones. Gala Celebration Weekend, including July 1, will include AAA and ASSA gifts to the School, a reception at the School, a Gala Event at the Hampton Convention Center, and other weekend events and activities. Two books, one on the School's history and one on its athletics history, will be published. The year 2019 will indeed be a banner one in The Apprentice School's history.

