



MARTHA SLUSHER
Teacher: Dahlgren School
from 1963-1986

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| <i>Introduction</i> | <p><u>MUSIC</u></p> <p>Welcome to the Dahlgren Centennial Celebration – A Century of Innovation. We hope that this and our many other products, events and offerings will showcase what Dahlgren has accomplished during its last 100 years.</p> <p>Throughout our history, we’ve interviewed some of the most prominent minds, leaders and innovators that have been here, and we’re opening up the vault to share them with you this year.</p> <p>Today we are honored to listen to the story of Martha Slusher, a teacher at Dahlgren School from around 1963 to about 1986.</p> <p>Let’s listen to Ms. Slusher...</p> |
| Gregg DiSalvo | You taught here for 24 years? |
| Slusher | Yes, and I loved it. It was the atmosphere that made it because we all knew each other because the school was that small. In certain areas, I would always think of something that was not pertaining to the fourth grade. There were some officers who questioned my ability because they had to question you before you were hired. And I was just doing it for the challenge because I was raising three children and in the Dahlgren paper they were advertising for a new teacher and I told my husband. He was working there and he didn’t want me to go to work. I said well I will just go down and get interviewed just in case they say yes. It surprised me so much. So from then on I really enjoyed that place. It’s grown up a lot now as you know. They’ve added on so many more rooms and other recreational areas. |
| Gregg DiSalvo | Where are you originally from? |
| Slusher | I am originally from right here in Virginia. I lived in Caroline, in King George and now Fredericksburg and I’m 90 years old. I have had a great life in many respects, but I always remember those years. I guess I might just call those the most challenging years of my life. I found that that naval base was a great place to live and the parents were marvelous? |
| Gregg DiSalvo | Well if you don’t mind, we will start with some basic general questions to get a good background and then we will dive more into the specifics of Dahlgren. So |





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| | how did you and your husband first meet? |
| Slusher | Oh, we met at Mary Washington College during either my senior or junior year. I graduated in 1948. I enjoyed college life tremendously and I was planning to get my master's degree but my husband took me and my three children to the University of Virginia and I was going to school there in hopes that they could attend but my youngest daughter was too young. She had never been to Kindergarten, so they turned me down and said no. We don't have young children but, the other two were accepted, but since I couldn't leave her at home or anywhere we packed up and came back home. Later on I took night classes when my husband was at home with the children. He worked at Dahlgren in the computer area. I just took classes. I never got my master's, which was ok. |
| Gregg Di Salvo | Where did you train to teach? Was that in these night classes? |
| Slusher | No, that was before I graduated. You had to practice teaching, so they would send us to bigger areas. They sent me to Fairfax and that's where I got my practice which was excellent. |
| Gregg DiSalvo | What subject did you teach? |
| Slusher | I taught the fourth grade. The principal want me to teach seventh grade, but I said no no no. I really loved that age child (fourth grade). They were wonderful children. Most of them were quite bright. In fact, it was somewhat a challenge to me, so I would give them all kinds of extra things like classical music. Things that were not required and they loved it and anything that was patriotic especially on the base. I just loved it. We would give programs and invite other classes to come. For instance when we were studying history back when they had bazars, I would have a practice bazar in the classroom to introduce them to trade and they would bring little things from home and we would say so things were a dollar a piece or 50 cents and if nobody would buy so I would say 25 cents, 10 cents and they learned to do that very well. |
| Gregg DiSalvo | Do you recall how many students were at the Dahlgren school when you taught there? |
| Slusher | The first year the teacher before in the third grade resigned because the children were so bad. That was the truth, but she had been there a long enough to retire, so everybody wondered who in the world was going to tackle this class. They had a disturbed boy in that class and nobody would do anything about it. I can't think of who the technical director of the base was. I wasn't supposed to but I didn't realize it at the time but I was going over the principal's head. I talked to that guy (the technical director) and he wanted to know how I |





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| | <p>liked teaching. I said I loved it except there's one student that is really disturbed and he really needs to be in a special school so the technical director got him out of there and sent him to a special school and then everything was all right. I can go back and tell you the names of some of those children. One of them is now a minister of the church I go to. She's not the minister of the church but she works in the church. Are you familiar with Jones at the newspaper?</p> |
| Gregg DiSalvo | <p>Ed Jones...Yes</p> |
| Slusher | <p>I remember teaching his younger brother or older brother or someone. Jones remembers lots.</p> |
| Gregg DiSalvo | <p>Can you tell us a little about your husband?</p> |
| Slusher | <p>That was a long time ago. He worked in K-lab, but he wasn't an officer</p> |
| Gregg DiSalvo | <p>What attracted you to Dahlgren? Well, what got him attracted him to Dahlgren?</p> |
| Slusher | <p>Well, we lived on a farm in King George and it was a colonial estate and he was a musician. He had his own band and that was just a hobby but he wanted to. He went to Hood College and then Peabody. We had one room with just musical instruments and he wanted to raise sheep. This has nothing to do with this but it does have something to do with my husband. They would bring up all these sheep and shear them. One mother had twins. They don't take care of their babies except for one, so they will take one and leave the other and so we adopted the baby and the children and I help raise the baby. That was just so much fun, but he did not succeed at any of this farming because he was not a farmer. So we were real close friends of the veterinarian and I told the veterinarian why don't we just sell all of these animals and go work on the base and we did. We sold everything and went down there to work and enjoyed it. He died early. He had heart troubles, but he enjoyed working there (the base) and he was successful.</p> |
| Gregg DiSalvo | <p>You mentioned King George County earlier. What was the relationship between Dahlgren and the surrounding area?</p> |
| Slusher | <p>Well, I tell you, everybody made their money by working at Dahlgren, which kept King George going. It (King George) has grown tremendously because of the base.</p> |





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| Gregg DiSalvo | Were the Dahlgren School students any different from any others you taught off base? |
| Slusher | They were smarter. |
| Gregg DiSalvo | Smarter. Why do you think that is? |
| Slusher | Because they had smarter parents. {Chuckle} |
| Gregg DiSalvo | What were some of your most memorable experiences teaching at Dahlgren? |
| Slusher | I had a lot of good experiences at Dahlgren, so I don't know what to tell you. It was dangerous driving sometimes. |
| Gregg DiSalvo | How come? |
| Slusher | Well, everyone was going to work at the same time, leaving at the same time and I'll never forget this bus, I don't know why, but it seemed to be chasing me and we got to a hill, an incline rather, and he would stay behind me instead of passing me. He was chasing me down. I finally, it was just two lanes, but I had to wait till all these cars got out of my way before I could change lanes. It was scary because I couldn't get over. I didn't have any bad accidents. They hadn't even put the light up at 301 to turn onto Dahlgren Road, but they have improved it. The saddest thing is when they had a school bus accident right there. A big ol truck was coming down right at 301 where the light is now and it hit the school bus. They had called for volunteers and that was the saddest thing to happen to me here on base because one of my good students got killed. |
| Karen Laughterback | So did you guys ever live on base or did you live off base? |
| Slusher | I drove to Dahlgren from King George. I got my own little car because I wouldn't drive in with my husband. He goes earlier than I go really. She was old enough and I would take her to school on the way. I'll never forget when she learned to drive that Toyota. We lived on a hill and she parked it on that hill and I got up one morning and I asked where's the car. She has left the brake off or something and it had back all the way down across the road into another vehicle. We had a chimney fire. Well I had put a lot of stuff in the fireplace. I guess I put too much. I know it was Christmas. The tree and all and it caused a Chimney fire. They came and boy did they come. I think King George has really really thrived because of all those people in Presidential Lakes. Ed Veazy have you ever heard of Ed Veazey. I remember teaching his children too. I might have taught him. I taught his son but anyway he owns Cleydale and sold it. It's a landmark and now he wants to buy it back. It belonged to a movie star. Alonya |





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| | <p>Massey I think was her name. She was a movie star that lived there, but whoever lived there after she died, bought it, and didn't take care of it.</p> |
| Conclusion | <p>Thank you for listening to this week's Dahlgren Centennial Podcast, and hopefully you have learned another interesting aspect of what our people accomplish for the Navy and for our nation.</p> <p>We will continue sharing how Dahlgren is a one-of-a-kind location where innovation is heralded as the hallmark of each individual.</p> <p><u>PAUSE</u></p> <p>Tune in next week to hear from Wes Meyers, whose significant work at Dahlgren spanned from 1944 to 1974. His podcast will focus on his contribution to the Elsie Project.</p> <p>Thank you for celebrating this century of innovation with us at Dahlgren.</p> <p><u>MUSIC</u></p> |

