

Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.

Fall 2017 Newsletter

P.O. Box 855 | Mathews, VA 23109-0855
mathewscounthistoricalociety.org



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE PAST

Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.
Holiday Open House

Tompkins Cottage Museum
Sat., Dec. 9th
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
43 Brickbat Rd.

Holiday Shopping
Ornaments • Publications
Capt. Sally Tompkins Dolls

Give the gift of history!

A Mathews County Historical Society membership makes a unique gift for a friend, family member or colleague.

Gift membership includes a welcome letter, the latest edition of the newsletter, and a Tompkins Cottage ornament.

Membership application form inside.



Winter Solstice Party

Sun., Dec. 10th | 4-7 p.m.
263 Lewis Lane | Home of Sandy Warhol

Join us for drinks, pot-luck hors d'oeuvres
& holiday cheer!

RSVP by Mon., Dec. 4th
Valerie Lewis
vslewis58@gmail or 804.366.1401



MCHS is supporting the Virginia Capitol Foundation's Virginia Women's Monument, *Voices from the Garden*, which will honor 12 important women in the Commonwealth's history. Capt. Sally Louisa Tompkins C.S.A. was selected because she was an efficient administrator whose insistence on cleanliness contributed to the high rate of survival of her patients. This bronze monument will be placed on Capitol Square in Richmond. Tax-deductible donations are being accepted to fund her statue. Please visit <https://virginiacapitol.gov/> for more information and donation forms.

President's Message

Forrest Morgan

Through the efforts of the historical society, Mathews Downtown Historic District has now been formally placed on the National Register of Historic Places. We are working with the county and VDOT to have directional signs erected showing the new historic district. Four additional historic districts have been created and are awaiting final steps to move to the Virginia State Register and eventually the National Register.

The society has been working with the nine historic interest groups in the county to coordinate their activities, share resources, and ideas to attract additional visitors to their sites and the county. We are facilitating, together with Preservation Mathews, a trail map of Mathews museums and historic sites that will be available in both hard copy and online forms. In January we are also sponsoring, with the Mathews County Historical Museum, a workshop for the nine organizations presented by the Virginia Tourism Corporation. The focus of the workshop will be on how to cooperate to draw tourism to the county through its history and potentially how to fund the operations.

The University of Florida, Proctor School of Oral History, visited the county in October and conducted a series of interviews on the historic country stores of Mathews. Until the advent of the widespread use of the automobile, country stores were the cultural and business centers of the county, and this effort was intended to capture stories about them that would otherwise be lost.

In July of 2018 the society, together with the Gwynn's Island Museum, the Court House Players, the 7th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line, the Cricket Hill Chapter of the DAR and the Mathews County Historical Museum, will present a series of events commemorating the Battle of Cricket Hill in 1776 which removed the last English governor from Virginia. Among the events that are being planned are a reenactment of the battle, including an amphibious invasion of Gwynn's Island, a presentation of the "Cricket on the Hill" play at the high school, originally written some forty years ago, as well as a speech by "Thomas Jefferson" (the Colonial Williamsburg version) explaining why the original action was so important to the American Revolution.

These are some of the projects that the historical society has been undertaking recently. Other projects will be presented to the membership as they are developed.

2017 MCHS BOARD

Forrest Morgan, *President*
Bobbi Hatton, *Vice President*
Lisa McCann, *Secretary*
Vicki Carter, *Treasurer*
John Caramia, *Member*
Tom Karow, *Member*
Reed Lawson, *Member*
Valerie Lewis, *Member*
Walt Sampson, *Member*
Sandy Warhol, *Member*
Al DeWitt, *Member*

Standing Committees

Tom Karow, *Archaeology*
Steve Pope, *Buildings & Grounds*
Jerry Ligon, *Education*
Bobbi Hatton, *Membership*
Forrest Morgan, *Programs*
Bobbi Hatton, *Nominating*
Bobbi Hatton, *Publications*

Ad Hoc Committees

Steve Wilson, *Editorial*
Steve Pope, *Fort Nonsense*
Reed Lawson, *Joint Archival*
Steve Pope, *Thomas James Store*
Valerie Lewis, *Social*

Positions

Reed Lawson, *Archivist*
Becky Barnhardt, *Curator/Registrar*
Becky Barnhardt, *Docent Coordinator*
Reed Lawson & Becky Barnhardt,
Newsletter
Jack White, *Registered Agent*

Archaeology

Tom Karow

Several fascinating sites in Mathews are currently being excavated. The Hall Site (Port Haywood) is an early 18th century site with exceptional artifacts and house site. The Bailey site (Glebe area) was worked in October and this 1650s tobacco farm site yielded more mid-17th century artifacts. A dig is planned at the Hotel Site (Mathews Main Street) and we have a solid late 18th to early 19th century site reflecting the commercial activities in the Mathews Downtown Historic District during that time.

For information about upcoming digs and volunteer opportunities please call Tom Karow 804-694-7216 or karowappraisal@verizon.net.



Archaeology Club

Jerry Ligon

We are excited to announce the start of an Archaeology Club at Thomas Hunter Middle School. This club is being facilitated by Tom Karow, a board member of Mathews County Historical Society and a Certified Archaeological Technician. Students meet every first and third Tuesday after school from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. and are led in exciting exercises in archaeology. Students are being taught how and what to look for when digging and the importance of documenting the location of any find. Students are always interested in "hidden treasures" and Tom Karow did an excellent job of bringing those treasures to life again.



Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia - A Series of Five

Martha W. McCartney

Work is underway on the third volume of Mathews County's antebellum historic properties with a publication date slated for Spring 2018. It will feature Bay View, Belmont, Folly Farm, Gamble house, Alexander James house, Milford, Oakland, Sandberg house, Tompkins Cottage, and Willow Grove. Architectural studies have been completed on seven of these structures and historical research has been done on four of them. Complete sets of information are available on three historic properties for which essays have been written in draft form.



James Store and Tompkins Cottage Museums

Steve Pope

Earlier this year it was announced that the James Store is in need of a new roof and that a competent firm was being solicited to remove the current asphalt shingles and install a crimp metal replacement. Michael Hall, a local roofer with extensive experience, has agreed to take on the project and should begin sometime before December; Graham Hood will be on site as the old roof is removed. Of particular interest is the possibility that some of the planks beneath the asphalt shingles may need to be replaced and this cannot be fully determined until the shingles are removed.



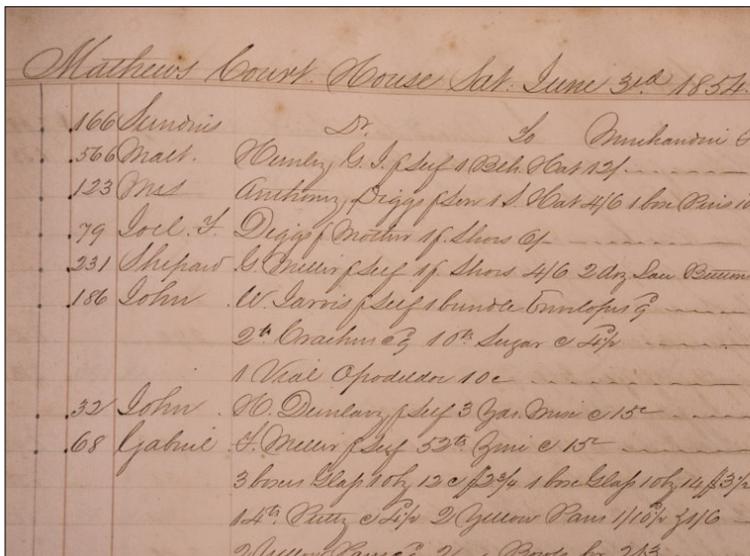
The Tompkins Cottage has reached a critical stage where it requires both interior and exterior repairs. A majority of the repairs need to be accomplished within the next few months, or by the time the cottage opens next year. We are in pursuit of a contractor or bonded carpenter to perform the work and will hopefully have more to report in near future. The Tompkins Cottage is the centerpiece of the Mathews County Historical Society (MCHS) and is largely the reason that the society was created, the old structure being saved from demolition by caring members of the Mathews community who came together to form the MCHS.

Mathews Archives

Reed Lawson

Mathews Archives is the partnership between MCHS and Mathews Memorial Library to house their respective collections and to provide access to the public. Recently, Richard Bryan of Wilmington, NC, donated a leather-bound journal which was in the possession of his uncle. The daily accounts are from F.A. & Co. (Francis Armistead), an establishment in Mathews Court House along Main Street. It covers transactions from January 9, 1854 to June 1, 1855 and is in excellent condition.

Other work continues on family papers of Richard Hollerith of Brighton Farm, the Billups of Moon, Sonny Richardson and Ray Hunley, to name a few.



MCHS Cultural Timeline Project

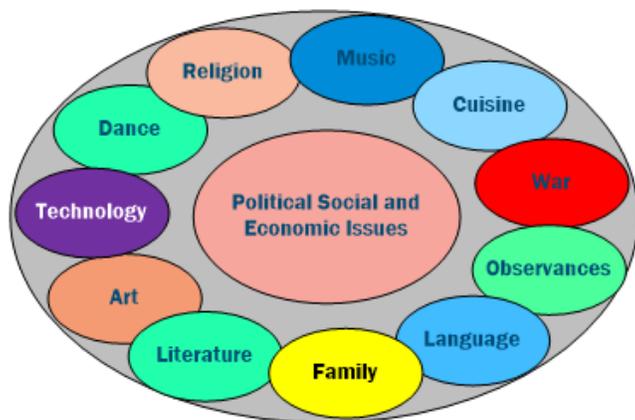
Walt Sampson

This three-year project is a timeline that views history from a cultural aspect. Dating from the early 17th century, it is the interaction of many cultures that truly define the history of Mathews County.

The aspects to be researched include language, cuisine, social habits, music, art, dance, religion, family life, technology, and political, social and economic issues.

The project will promote the teaching of cultural history in the schools, provide a platform for oral histories and expand visitor attraction to Mathews.

Elements of Culture



TVHS and 6th Grader Tours

Reed Lawson

MCHS was privileged to host the Tidewater Virginia Historical Society on Tuesday, September 26th, on a tour of Mathews historical sites. Approximately 42 members of the organization visited Tompkins Cottage Museum, Thomas James Store Museum, the Historic Courthouse, Sibley's Store, Westville Christian Church, Mathews Maritime Museum and Poplar Grove Tide Mill. The day went quite well and this concept will be considered as a possible event the society could sponsor for various societies and interest groups in the future. Becky Barnhardt was the coordinator assisted during the day by Bobbi Hatton, Steve Pope, Sue Freeman, Libby Crawford and Reed Lawson.

On the following day, the cottage, again, was open for all 6th graders of Thomas Hunter Middle School as part of a local history tour of the Mathews Court House area. MCHS co-sponsored with the SCV Lane Armistead Camp #1772 and Marilyn Iglesias of the Capt. Sally Tompkins chapter of the UDC. Becky was the lead for this tour, assisted by Mari Gibbs, Steve and Reed.

Mathews County Historical Museum

Sandy Warhol

MCHM reports that May Faire for 2018 will be held May 5th from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the Mathews Court Green. The theme is Rockin' and a Rollin' in the 50s, and the fair will feature a car show, sock hop, fashion show, arts and crafts, music all day, food vendors and various contests. Strategic planning is underway under the direction of John Caramia. The nominating committee of Elsa Verbyla and Josie Thorpe is seeking candidates for offices; the first Annual Meeting will be held early in the year. mathewscountyvahistoricalmuseum.org



Mathews County Historical Society Ornament Series

\$25 each. Please add \$3.99 shipping to each ornament, make check payable to MCHS and submit to:

Publications & Ornaments
Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.
P. O. Box 855
Mathews, VA 23109



Poplar Grove Tide Mill



Fort Nonsense Historical Park



Osprey



Tompkins Cottage

Mathews County Historical Society Publications

Mathews County, Virginia: Lost Landscapes, Untold Stories by Martha W. McCartney. Hardcover \$35, Softcover \$25.

History and Progress, Mathews County, Virginia by MCHS. \$30

Mathews County Panorama: A Pictorial History of Mathews County 1791-1941 by MCHS. \$27.95

Tombstones of Mathews County, Virginia, 1711-1986 compiled by Christine L. Sheridan and Elsie W. Ernst. \$25

Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia, Vol. 1 by MCHS. \$11.95

Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia, Vol. 2 by MCHS. \$11.95

New Point Comfort Lighthouse, Its History and Preservation by Mary Louise Clifford and J. Candace Clifford. \$20

Mathews Men Who Served in the War Between the States by Mrs. Bernard Franklin White. \$8

Please add \$3.99 shipping to each book, make check payable to MCHS and submit to:

Publications & Ornaments | Mathews County Historical Society, Inc. | P. O. Box 855 | Mathews, VA 23109

Membership

Dues for the Historical Society's 2018 membership are due in January or please feel free to renew your membership now! Dues paid now will ensure your membership remains current through 2018.

MCHS offers its members a quarterly newsletter and a wide variety of lectures and programs, which have featured renowned historians and authors. The society provides exhibits and three annual social gatherings. Our members can give as much or as little of their time as they see fit. We welcome and appreciate your active participation and input.

2018 Membership Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

I am interested in the following membership:

- Individual, \$35 per year
- Couple/Family, \$50 per year
- Active Duty Military, \$15 per year
- Student (under 18), FREE
- Lifetime Membership, \$500

I would like to make a gift to the preservation, collection & interpretation of Mathews County history:

- Friend of MCHS, \$100
- Benefactor of MCHS, \$250
- Lifetime Member of MCHS, \$500
- Historian of MCHS, \$1000

I would like to make a contribution to one of the following designated funds:

- \$ _____ Mathews Archives Fund
- \$ _____ Archaeology Fund
- \$ _____ New Point Comfort Lighthouse Preservation Fund
- \$ _____ Fort Nonsense Fund
- \$ _____ Thomas James Store Fund
- \$ _____ Publications Fund

\$ _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Thank you for your interest and support of the Mathews County Historical Society. Please make check payable to MCHS and submit along with this application to:

Membership Chair | Mathews County Historical Society, Inc. | P. O. Box 855 | Mathews, VA 23109

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Tompkins Cottage Museum during Market Days 2017. Do-cents and visitors (238) alike greeted glorious weather—clear skies and moderate temperatures. Author Martha McCartney signed copies of the MCHS publication *Mathews County, Virginia Lost Landscapes and Untold Stories*.



The “Good Witch of Westville” (Mari Gibbs) was at the Tompkins Cottage to hand out candy to the ghouls, goblins, witches, fairy princesses, superheroes and many other cos-tumed characters during the Main Street Trick-or-Treat Pa-rade.



Carl Lounsbury, retired architectural historian at CWF, spoke on Wed., November 1st about regionalism in early American ecclesiastical architecture. Shown with Mr. Lounsbury, on the left, is Martha McCartney and Graham Hood.