

# Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.

## Winter 2018 Newsletter

P.O. Box 855 | Mathews, VA 23109-0855  
[mathewscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://mathewscountyhistoricalsociety.org)



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE PAST

### *MCHS Annual Meeting*

Wed., Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> | 6 p.m.  
Mathews Yacht Club | 390 Yacht Club Road

\$32 per person

RSVP by Mon., Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>  
Valerie Lewis  
[vslewis58@gmail.com](mailto:vslewis58@gmail.com) or 804.366.1401

Greek Salad

o o o

Apple Stuffed Pork Tenderloin

or

Herb Crusted Salmon

o o o

Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Vegetable Medley

o o o

Assorted Desserts

### **Nowhere to Run: Dunmore's Floating City and a Diminishing Loyalist World**

**Brenden Burke**, Associate Director of Archaeology for the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Maritime Museum  
Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> | 7 p.m.

Kingston Parish Hall | 370 Main St. | Mathews, VA

In 1775, Virginia and her fellow colonies struggled to emerge from colonial control. John Murray, better known as the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dunmore, served as Virginia's final, and arguably most ignominious colonial governor. On June 8, 1775 Dunmore succumbed to political and military pressure and departed the capital at Williamsburg. Gov. Dunmore, his fellow loyalists, and troops began a thirteen-month saga that wound their way out the James River and up the Bay. En route, Gwynn's Island became Dunmore's last stand in what we now know as the Battle of Cricket Hill. Today, we seek to find evidence of this battle, much of which took place over the water. Mathews County Historical Society, the Institute of Maritime History (IMH), Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program (LAMP), and the Archaeological Society of Virginia (ASV) will undertake a survey of waters around Gwynn's Island this spring in an effort to find evidence of the battle, and a victory for Patriot forces.

Brenden Burke will discuss the history leading up to the battle and the technology and techniques involved in the underwater search.

This is the first in a series of events to commemorate the Battle of Cricket Hill.



## **President's Message**

Forrest Morgan

2017 has been a most eventful year for the Mathews County Historical Society: The Downtown Mathews Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places through the efforts of the Society and four more Historic Districts are in the wings. Twenty additional Oral Histories were recorded on the subject of the "Country Stores of Mathews", information that otherwise might have been lost. A database for the "Prehistoric Peoples of Mathews" is in development and will document thousands of 10 to 12 thousand year old artifacts. 300 structures in Mathews were identified as "historic" by a survey undertaken by the Fairfield Foundation for the Society. A number of these structures were found to be important enough to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Longwood University, under a grant to the County and the Society, recently completed a Chesapeake Bay Shoreline Survey. The survey, which showed previous shoreline erosion with predictions for the future, disclosed the existence of numerous unknown prehistoric and historic archaeological sites. Copies of the survey will be provided to the County for planning purposes.

The major event in the coming year will be the reenactment and commemoration of the Battle of Cricket Hill. In July 1776 American troops defeated Lord Dunmore, the last English governor of Virginia, in a battle at Gwynn's Island that compelled him to leave Virginia and free up patriot troops to join Washington in New York. We will partner with the Gwynn's Island Museum to do a major commemoration and stage a reenactment of the battle, complete with artillery, infantry, Marines and a naval invasion of the island on July 7 and 8. There will be several events leading up to the commemoration including a lecture in March by Thomas Jefferson (Bill Barker from Colonial Williamsburg) about the map he drew of the battle and his efforts in drafting the Declaration of Independence. In April, there will be a major underwater survey of waters surrounding Gwynn's Island searching for the remains of British ships lost in the engagement. The effort, overseen by John Broadwater, the underwater archaeologist who documented the British ships lost in the battle at Yorktown and more recently raised the USS Monitor. The survey group will also document other historic shipwrecks around the county. There will also be a presentation on February 28 by the survey group of how they will conduct underwater exploration and what they learned about Dunmore's fleet from prior surveys. The Courthouse Players will present the play "Crickets on the Hill" about the Battle of Cricket Hill at the end of June.

Perhaps the most important development of the year is the bringing together of the nine historic interest groups in the county. All nine groups are participating and in the joint effort will produce a common marketing theme for museums and historic sites in the county; each group will develop an activity contributing to the common theme. The efforts will be heavily promoted to target markets and will be designed to draw visitors to each group's facilities as well as the county in general. We expect that this experience will now promote further cooperation on a number of items in the future.

## **2017 MCHS BOARD**

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

## **Archaeology**

Tom Karow

Excavations will continue at the 18th century Hall Site near Port Haywood and a clean-up day was held for the historic Brooks Cemetery at New Point on Saturday January 27th. The cemetery is a threatened site and Fairfield Foundation is leading the efforts to document and clean up the site. Two members of the MCHS Board gave lectures at "Bay Days" January 25th, an annual event at THMS. Tom Karow and Bobbi Hatton taught the children the basics of historic and prehistoric archaeology.



## **Archaeology Club**

Tom Karow

The archaeology club at Thomas Hunter Middle School (THMS) continues with the washing of artifacts from the last Hotel Site (Mathews Main Street) dig. Interesting items include a decorated clay pipe bowl fragment from the late 18th century and two pieces of a porcelain doll's head with painted blue dot eyes. The club will continue washing artifacts from the Hotel Site and we have a potential archaeological survey site for spring, looking for remnants of a shipyard reported to be in the Mathews Court House area.



*For information about upcoming digs and volunteer opportunities please call Tom Karow 804-694-7216.*

## **Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia – A Series of Five**

Martha W. McCartney

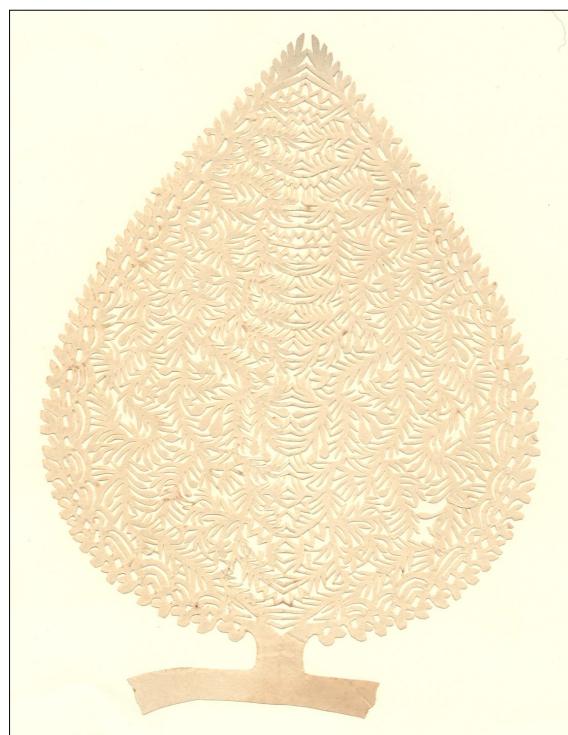
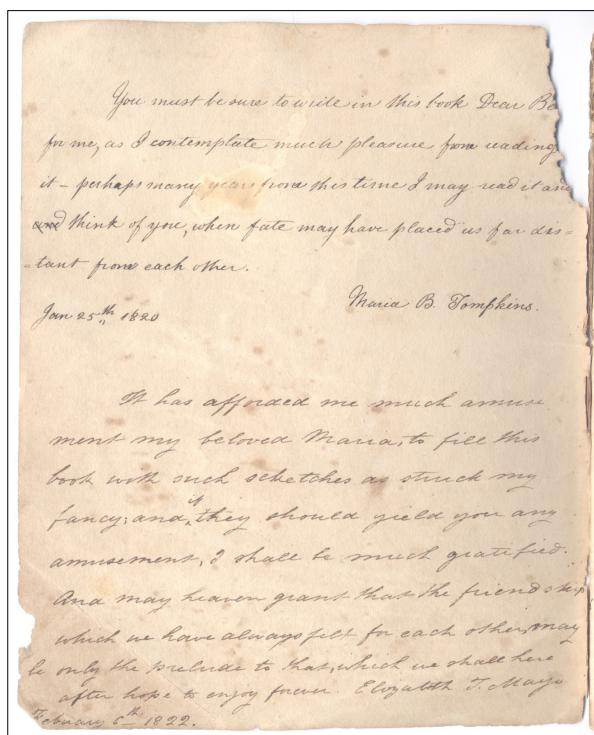
Significant progress has been made on the third volume of Mathews County's antebellum historic properties, which will feature Bay View, Belmont, Folly Farm, the Miles-Gamble house, Alexander James house, Milford, Oakland, Sandberg house, Tompkins Cottage, and Willow Grove. Dr. Carl Lounsbury, a much respected architectural historian, has completed his analysis of Belmont and the Miles-Gamble house and has submitted his reports. Historical research has been completed on all but three of these dwellings and draft essays have been written on seven of the ten buildings.



## Mathews Archives

Reed Lawson

The Mathews Archives contains irreplaceable and invaluable documents, photographs and ephemera. This is well-known. However, in addition to this historical bounty are items of unimaginable elegance and grace. One such treasure is a handwritten copybook, a gift of Maria B. Tompkins (mother of Capt. Sally L. Tompkins, CSA) to Elizabeth T. Mayo dated June 25, 1820. It is filled with writings and was returned to Mrs. Tompkins February 8, 1822. Delicate paper lace shapes and a silhouette are inserted between pages containing the poetry of Shakespeare, Byron, St. George Tucker, Tennyson and others. Mrs. Arthur L. Vogelback donated the item to the historical society in 1992. It is housed in the Herman Hollerith Archival Room in the Judith Feild Vogelback Collection, Archives Box 19 R #49-4 and is available for viewing.



## Tompkins Cottage Museum

Becky Foster Barnhardt

The Tompkins Cottage Museum will open for the 2018 season on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. The cottage will feature several new exhibits about the history of the cottage and the people who once lived and worked there. Plans are underway for a variety of craft and trade demonstrations, a storyteller or two, and period music to be held at various times during the season.



**Love history? Become a docent! We will train you...**

**Docent Training - Tompkins Cottage Museum**

43 Brickbat Rd.

Saturday, March 17<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> | 10 a.m. to noon

The Mathews County Historical Society seeks volunteer docents to support its historical exhibitions at the Tompkins Cottage Museum every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. beginning April 7<sup>th</sup> and ending October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Volunteer docents serve as hosts and guides for the museum. This is an opportunity to learn about Mathews' history and at the same time provide a valuable community service. Our docents learn so much and meet wonderful visitors!



Becky Foster Barnhardt

Curator, Tompkins Cottage Museum

[beckybarnhardt@verizon.net](mailto:beckybarnhardt@verizon.net)

**Capt. Sally Louisa Tompkins Monument Update**

*Richmond Times Dispatch*

December 16, 2017

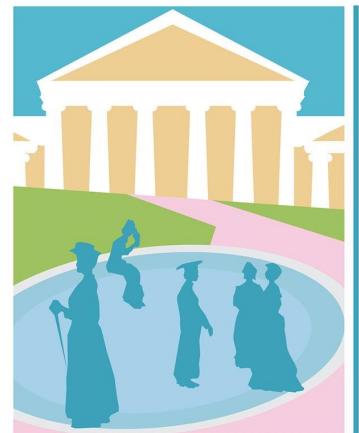
**"Statues will include Confederate officer who ran hospital."**

The monument entitled *Voices from the Garden* will honor 12 important women in the 400 years of the Commonwealth's history. Capt. Sally Louisa Tompkins CSA was selected in 2013 along with the other notable women.

Governor Ralph Northam and the commission see a distinction between Tompkins and other Confederate officers. "The women who were selected contributed to Virginia at different times in our history and in different ways." She accepted her commission when it was the only way to keep her hospital open. Her pioneering achievements and that she refused pay affirmed her support by the monument commission in these unsettling times. Mary Margaret Whipple D-Arlington stated, "Tompkins was so respectful of hygiene that her hospital is said to have had the highest survival rate of any during the Civil War." Capt. Sally stated in a 1907 interview with the *Times-Dispatch*, "My aim and object was to help all I could, not be paid for it."

This year also marks the 400th anniversary of the Virginia General Assembly and the first documented arrival of Africans to English North America.

The 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.



## 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

Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.  
P. O. Box 855  
Mathews, VA 23109-0855

## 2018 Mathews County Museum Calendar

### **Tompkins Cottage Museum**

Saturdays, April – October  
10 a.m.-1p.m.

### **Thomas James Store**

Saturdays, April – October  
10 a.m.-1p.m.

### **Gwynn's Island Museum**

Fridays & Saturdays, April – October  
1-5p.m.

### **Mathews Maritime Museum**

Fridays & Saturdays, April – October  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

### **Tompkins Cottage Museum**

#### ***Holiday Open House***

Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>  
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

## 2018 Mathews County Events Calendar

### **May Faire**

Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup>  
9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

### **Gwynn's Island Festival**

Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

### **Mathews Market Days**

Friday & Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

### **Mathews Christmas Parade**

Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>  
1 p.m.