

Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.

Winter 2024 Newsletter

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

mathewscounthistoricalociety.org | info@mathewscounthistoricalociety.org



CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE PAST

Nominations Committee

MCHS will be electing officers and new members of the Board of Directors at the annual meeting on February 15.

Proposed Slate of Officers: Reed Lawson, president; Amy Baker, vice-president; Martha McCartney, secretary; and Hunt Thompson, treasurer. Note: for Reed to serve a 5th year as board president, the membership must approve suspending the bylaws.

Incumbent Board Members:

Class of 2024: Reed Lawson, Ray Stubblebine, Hunt Thompson, and Roger Emig

Class of 2025: Liz Bateman, Terri Hyman, Martha McCartney, and Tim Morgan

Class of 2026: Marybeth Almond, Amy Baker, Marsha Carlton and John Hoffman

The biographies of our two prospective board members appear below. Roger was approved in November to fill a board vacancy.

Marybeth Almond has lived in Mathews since 1997. Prior to that time she resided in Deltaville, where she owned and managed the J&M Marina. She is an elder, treasurer, and trustee of Westville Christian Church and has volunteered for Meals on Wheels for the past 6 years.



Marybeth Almond

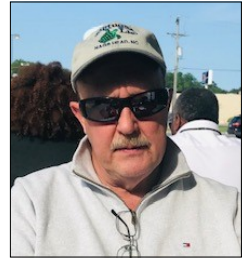
Roger Emig was employed by the State of New Jersey government for 34 years in senior management positions in three different departments. After moving to Mathews in 2002, he served as a Magistrate for Mathews, Middlesex, Gloucester, and Williamsburg/James City County/York County at various times. He has served as president, treasurer, and member-at-large of the Mathews Ruritan Club and is a member of Salem Church Mathews' Adminis-



Roger Emig

trative Board and Board of Trustees.

John Hoffman, a Virginia native, has degrees in electrical engineering from Virginia Tech and Johns Hopkins and worked in Maryland before moving to Mathews in 2019. He has a longstanding interest in Virginia history and looks forward to being able to assist the Mathews County Historical Society with its various projects.



John Hoffman

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, February 15th
6:00 p.m.

Kingston Parish House
370 Main St. • Mathews, Va.

\$30 per person
Payable to the
Treasurer P.O. Box 855 Mathews, VA 23109
or at the door

Caprese Salad
◦ ◦ ◦

Filet of Beef
with Rolls & Horseradish Sauce

Grilled Salmon Filet
with Dill & Lemon
◦ ◦ ◦

Seasoned Roasted Baby Potatoes
Zucchini & Squash Medley
◦ ◦ ◦

Cobbler with Ice Cream
◦ ◦ ◦

Coffee, Tea, Water & Wine

RSVP by February 9th
reed.lawson8880@gmail.com
or (804) 725-3375

President's Message

Reed Lawson

The MCHS Board of Directors has worked diligently this past year. So, as we look forward to 2024, I thank all for their hard work and willingness to give of their time and talents.

2023 was a busy year. Society members:

- Organized the Thomas James Store lift project after receiving approval from the state.
- Received approval for the "Flights to Freedom" highway marker that the MCHS co-sponsored with the NAACP Mathews Branch and First Baptist Church.
- Received a Mathews Community Foundation grant to update the interpretive signage at Thomas James Store once the lift has been completed.
- Launched Historic Homes and Properties Book 5 at the opening of the tourist season in April with a reception for homeowners at Tompkins Cottage.
- In collaboration with Mathews County, applied for a Commonwealth History Fund grant to lift and relocate Tompkins Cottage above the flood zone.
- Maintained the Mathews Archives in partnership with the library.
- Participated in two countywide highway cleanup days.
- Sponsored a bus trip to Historic Stratford Hall for its September Wine and Oyster Festival.
- Participated in May Faire, Gwynn's Island Festival and Mathews Market Days and opened the Tompkins Cottage for the Thanksgiving and Christmas Markets.
- Hosted Mathews Elementary School second-graders at the Cottage for a morning of age-appropriate history.
- Participated in the Halloween Howl-a-Palooza parade of ghosts and goblins.
- Sponsored two public lectures: one on James Lafayette, a Revolutionary War spy and one on the haunted Hudgins House.
- Sold MCHS publications, ornaments, and other merchandise at local and online retail outlets.
- Held a BBQ supper at the Thomas James Store in honor of MCHS volunteers and donors.
- Began representing the MCHS on the Mathews County VA250 Committee, which between now and 2026 will sponsor projects and events commemorating the Revolutionary War.
- Held the MCHS's Annual Meeting and dinner in February; Tim Morgan was elected to the Class of 2025 and the incumbent officers were re-elected.
- Held the winter solstice party at the home of Cindy and Jack Kloke and the summer solstice party at Keith Lowe's home.
- Modernized the MCHS by creating a Strategic Plan that charts the way forward; is reviewing and updating the bylaws and Manual of Operations; exploring cloud file storage for society records (ongoing); and succeeded in setting up online sales, donations, and membership applications/renewals. Point-of-sales capability is being investigated.

MCHS BOARD

President: Reed Lawson

Vice President: Martha McCartney

Secretary: Trish Reed

Treasurer: Hunt Thompson

Class of 2023

Amy Baker

Marsha Carlton

Reed Lawson

Trish Reed

Class of 2024

Roger Emig

Ray Stubblebine

Hunt Thompson

Class of 2025

Liz Bateman

Terri Hyman

Martha McCartney

Tim Morgan

Standing Committees

Building & Grounds: Marsha Carlton

Education: Terri Hyman, Martha McCartney

Governance: Tim Morgan, Martha

McCartney & Trish Reed

Market Days: Becky Barnhardt

Membership: Hunt Thompson

Programs: Becky Barnhardt, Terri Hyman

& Trish Reed

Publications: Liz Bateman, Trish Reed

Publicity: Becky Barnhardt, Martha

McCartney

Ad Hoc Committees

Editorial Board: Martha McCartney

Finance: Hunt Thompson, Marsha Carlton,

Tim Morgan

Special Events: Ray Stubblebine

Social: Trish Reed

Positions

Archivist: Reed Lawson

Curator, Tompkins Cottage: Becky Barnhardt

Curator, James Store: TBD

Docent Coordinator: Terri Hyman

Newsletter: Becky Barnhardt

Newsletter Distribution: Terri Hyman

Registered Agent: Hunt Thompson

Webmaster, FaceBook Admin: Becky Barnhardt

President's Message cont'd...

Thanks to all of the committee chairs, members and friends who helped with these projects, which make our organization a success. Special thanks to student members Hunter Owens and Eloise Leslie! Hunter provided lovely music during our BBQ supper and Eloise was our very own Elf on the Half-Shell during the Christmas parade.

Looking ahead, 2024 promises to be a full and exciting year. In addition to the previously-mentioned projects, the MCHS is planning to:

- Present four public lectures.
- Sponsor an Historic House Tour in June.
- Unveil the "Flights to Freedom" highway marker.
- Re-institute the Music on Maple Ave concerts, a fundraiser we co-sponsor with the Mathews County Visitor Information Center.
- As a major stakeholder in the New Point Comfort Lighthouse Overlook boardwalk project, place the last interpretive panel.
- Celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the historical society. A new ornament is in the works.

Last but not least, please attend our winter party and bring friends and potential new members! And, don't forget the Annual Meeting, Feb. 15th at Kingston Parish House!

In closing, I'd like to thank you, our members, for your ongoing support and validation of the society's efforts to fulfill its mission: promoting Mathews County history and heritage.

In Memoriam

The society was saddened to hear of the passing of lifetime member Raymond 'Ray' Patrick Blake of Susan, Va., on Christmas Day. A Vietnam Veteran, Ray was a yachtsman, Baltimore Orioles and Ravens fan and had a career in the greater Washington-Baltimore market in multi-unit operations. He and his wife Brenda retired/returned to Mathews a number of years ago and have been active in the community ever since. Ray's service was held the afternoon of January 14th at their home on Mobjack Bay.

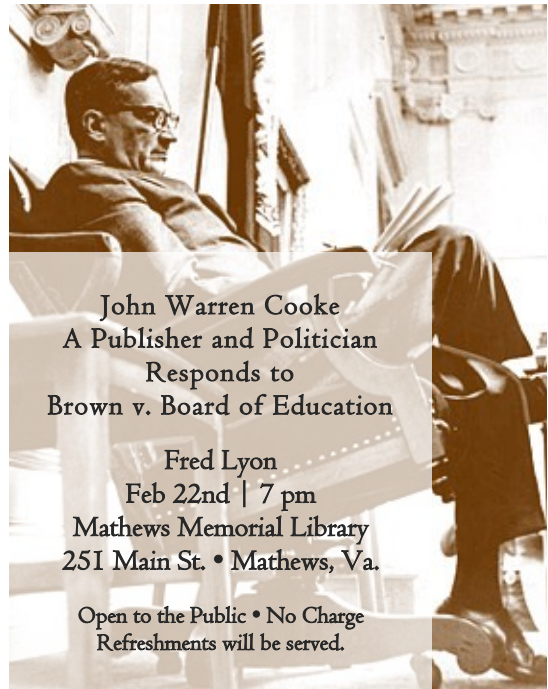
Our heartfelt condolences to Brenda and their family. *Pax vobiscum.*

WINTER PARTY

January 27th • 4 - 6 pm
Home of Martha McCartney
573 Waterfront Lane, Hudgins, Va.

Bring friends and a savory or sweet dish.
Beverages provided by MCHS.

RSVP Trish (703) 801-7682 or
treed7311@gmail.com
by January 22nd



MCHS Reports

2023 in Review and a Look Forward to 2024

Google Workspace – Cloud Storage

Last September, the Board voted to implement Google Workspace, a web-based suite of software that includes Gmail, calendars, cloud storage, and online meeting access. Google Workspace will allow any Board member or members with internet access and a password to access the organization's minutes and other important documents, such as the bylaws and Manual of Operations. It also will allow Board members to work collaboratively, but remotely, on various types of projects. At first, our cloud storage space will be used to provide access to working documents. However, we intend to monitor our storage needs and may decide to add more at a future date.



Google provides free access and deep discounts to qualified nonprofit organizations that use this product. Currently, we are in the process of establishing our organization's eligibility. Once that has been achieved, we will roll it out immediately. All Board members will be trained so that they become familiar with the various applications. Implementation of Google Workspace will provide the MCHS Board with a much more efficient and professional way of conducting business. It also will allow our organization to do a better job of advancing its mission.

Mathews Archives

Mathews Archives, the partnership between Mathews County Historical Society and Mathews Memorial Library, is housed in the Herman Hollerith Archival Room at the library. A primary focus in 2023 has been digitization of archival material into four categories - Bible Records, Documents, Photos, Prints and Postcards and Objects. Access is gained on the library website homepage, the Digital Archives link box. This year, there were 18 additional accessions with a total of 461 items added. Of these 18, six were new individual collections. To date there are 209 separate collections in the archives with approximately 8,046 items contained therein.

Membership

We currently have 40 individual members plus 70 joint members as well as 30 lifetime members. This year's new lifetime members are Marymac and John Hoffman, Ruth and Tim Morgan and Molly Ward. Additional new mem-

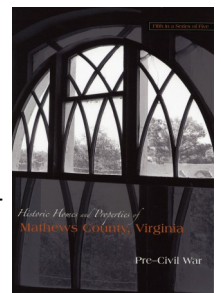
bers were Marybeth Almond, James Dean, Roger Emig, Dan and Carla Hill, and Jim McKinnon. We look forward to further expansion of our membership.

Programs

Upcoming program speakers for the 2024 season are Fred Lyon speaking on "John Warren Cooke - A Publisher and Politician Responds to Brown v. Board of Education," John Coulter speaking on Mathews native and C.S.A. Brigadier-General James Henry Lane, and Benn Trask speaking on "Lighthouse Keepers of Mathews County". At the time of publication, a fourth program on the Chesapeake Bay oyster wars has not been finalized.

Publication & Ornament Sales

This has been a busy year for the MCHS's Retail Sales Committee. Volume 5 of the *Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia: Pre-Civil War*, the final volume in this series, was published and made available to the public. Completion of the New Point Comfort Lighthouse restoration project has stimulated interest in the society's book about the lighthouse, our beautiful lighthouse ornament, and our lighthouse notecards.



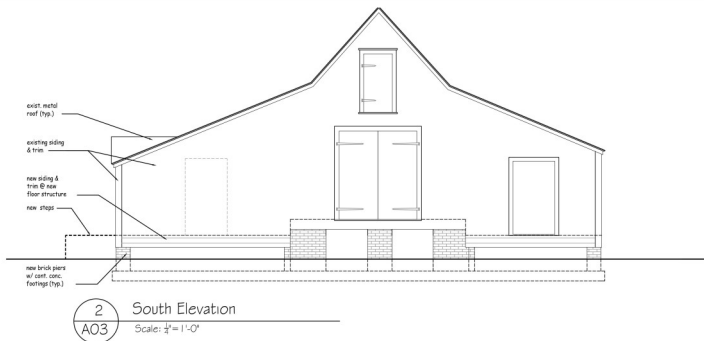
At the close of 2023, the MCHS added an important feature to its website. Now, it is possible to purchase publications, ornaments, and gift certificates online with a credit card. This capability has greatly expanded our ability to share our sales items with people all over the country. Moreover, our gift certificates allow recipients to select the items they want. The society will continue selling its publications through Amazon and to offer merchandise at the Tompkins Cottage Museum and the Mathews County Visitor's Center. We look forward to having a prosperous year in 2024 as well.

Thomas James Store

The Mathews County Historical Society received a grant from the Virginia Department of Historic Resource to lift and replace the foundation on the James Store building.

We received bids from three vendors and have made a choice from among the three bids. In December we attended a meeting that brought together Reed Lawson and Marsha Carlton from MCHS, architect, contractor and representatives from the Mathews Visitors Center and the Mathews Memorial Library. The James Store building is adjacent to the library courtyard, visitor center and Maple Avenue and we progress with the mindfulness of completing this project and remaining good neighbors.

We hope to have the James Store lift project completed in time for the library's spring events in their courtyard.



Architect's draft elevation of the south side of Thomas James Store.

Tompkins Cottage Museum

In 2023, the Cottage had approximately 1183 visitors! Highlights of the 2023 season were a spring tour of the Cottage conducted by Terri Hyman and Reed Lawson for the Mathews Elementary School second-graders with an archeology workshop conducted by the Fairfield Foundation. A public archeology dig for all ages was conducted by the Fairfield Foundation during May Faire and Market Days. Authors Martha McCartney, Benn Trask and Thomas Wiatt signed their books and representatives from the Gwynn's Island Museum, Gwynn's Island Project, Mathews Land Conservancy, and P.E.O joined us for Market Days. The Middle Peninsula Amateur Radio Club conducted a broadcast about Captain Sally Tompkins on the lawn during the Thanksgiving Open House.

Docent Training for new and returning volunteers will be held at the Cottage on March 16th and 23rd, 10 a.m. to noon. For additional information, beckybarnhardt@verizon.net or call 804-725-7242.

In September, the society, in collaboration with Mathews County officials, prepared a grant application for "The Tompkins Cottage - Floodproofing, Restoration and Accessibility" project. The county, as the property owner, submitted it to the Commonwealth History Fund. The Tompkins Cottage has been highly susceptible to moisture damage over the years, thanks to its construction on low brick piers. The cottage's location also makes it vulnerable to flooding. Moreover, the building has not had a substantial renovation since its acquisition by the county in 1965. This grant, if successful, will help fund the county's plans to elevate the cottage, provide enhanced access, stabilize the structure, and modernize important infrastructure such as HVAC, security, and lighting. This work will provide our volunteers and visitors with a safer, more comfortable environment through which to share Mathews' rich history. The Commonwealth History Fund will announce grant awards in early 2024.



Architect's rendering of the Tompkins Cottage lift and relocation plan.



VIRGINIA
ASSOCIATION
of MUSEUMS

SNAPSHOTS

MCHS was very busy October through December!

A volunteer/donor BBQ supper was held at the Thomas James Store with entertainment provided by Hunter Owens. Benn Trask entertained us with a ghost story of the Hudgins House at the Mathews Memorial Library in October.

In November, the MCHS Road Warriors picked-up trash along Route 14. The Middle Peninsula Amateur Radio Club joined us for our annual Thanksgiving Open House at the Tompkins Cottage.

The Tompkins Cottage held its annual Christmas Open House, and MCHS joined in the annual Mathews Christmas parade on December 9th.



MCHS Membership & Sales

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE!

JOIN | RENEW | DONATE | SHOP

www.mathewscountyhistoricalsociety.org

VISA, MasterCard, American Express or Discover

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Individual : \$35

Couple/Family: \$50

Active Duty Military: \$15

Student, FREE

Lifetime: \$500

DONATE

General Fund

Mathews Archives Fund

New Point Comfort Lighthouse Fund

Publications Fund

Thomas James Store Fund

Tompkins Cottage Fund

DONATION LEVELS

Researcher, under \$100

Friend, \$100

Benefactor, \$250

Patron, \$500

Historian, \$1000

PUBLICATIONS

*Mathews County, Virginia: Lost Landscapes,
Untold Stories*

History and Progress, Mathews County, Virginia

*Mathews County Panorama: A Pictorial History of
Mathews County 1791-1941*

Tombstones of Mathews County, Virginia, 1711-1986

*Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County,
Virginia Pre-Civil War, Volumes 1-5*

*New Point Comfort Lighthouse, Its History
and Preservation*

HISTORICAL ORNAMENT SERIES

New Point Comfort Lighthouse

Historic Courthouse | Poplar Grove Tide Mill

Fort Nonsense | Osprey | Tompkins Cottage

Donations to MCHS in 2023

Researcher

Fr. John Armistead

Michael John Boyd – *In memory of
Joe C. Sellers*

Annette Breingan & Tyler White

Molly Buford

Mairi Furniss

Romy Hollerith

Eloise Leslie

Janet McCabe

Becky Morgan

Gay Pfister

Martha Ellen Traband

Friend

Brenda & Dennis Baker

Dee Bane

Dale Foster

Carla & Dan Hill

Sue & Pete Jennette

Keith Lowe

Ruth & Tim Morgan

Priscilla Muhlenkamp & Ben Sliwka

Susan Powell – *In memory of William*

Penn Lewis & W.P. Lewis

Connie & Sonny Richardson

Allison Thomas

Benefactor

Marybeth Almond

Nancy & Paul Katsuki – *In memory of*

Bonnie Stevenson

Jim McKinnon

Janice Phillips

Patron

Brenda Ripley & Ray Blake

Julie Lachman & David Thomas

Historian

Anonymous

Cindy & Jack Kloke

Reed Lawson – *In memory of Bob*

Warren & Will Story

Hunt Thompson

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

2024 MCHS Winter Calendar

Winter Events

Winter Party

January 20th, 4-6 p.m.
Home of Martha McCartney
573 Waterfront Lane | Mathews, Va.

Winter Board Meetings

Kingston Parish House

January 18th, 4 p.m.

Mathews Memorial Library

March 21st, 4 p.m.

Annual Meeting & Dinner

February 15th, 6 p.m.
Kingston Parish House
370 Main St. | Mathews, Va.

Fred Lyon

*John Warren Cooke - A Publisher and Politician
Responds to Brown v. Board of Education*
February 22nd, 7 p.m.
Mathews Memorial Library

Tompkins Cottage Museum

Docent Training
March 16th & 23rd, 10 a.m. – noon