

MATHEWS MUSEUM
“More Than Just History”
BULLETIN
September, 2024

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

Over the past few months our museum has undergone a name change and a major shift in focus. In order to end long-term confusion with another Mathews historical group, it was decided that we adopt a shorter and more simplistic name: MATHEWS MUSEUM. “more than just history.” Along with our new name, we are dedicated to transforming our former, multi-use building, into an exhibit-filled, premier museum and educational center for our students, citizens and visitors alike.

Please help us on our quest for excellence by becoming a member today! Your financial support is essential for the future of our educational programs and historical exhibits. But, more importantly, we need your physical support. Keeping the museum open to the public, researching historical artifacts and documents, and hosting receptions for new exhibits, is a drain on our wonderful volunteers, and I’m asking for your help.

Join up today and help us preserve our past for generations to come. Call the museum to discuss how you can best serve your community and have fun doing it. 804-505-1277. I look forward to meeting you soon.

Tom Robinson, President

UPCOMING EVENTS

Local Historian, Lori Jackson to Discuss “How to tell your family story”

Local historian and genealogist, Lori Jackson Black, will present “How to Tell Your Family Story,” with a strategy for being successful, in developing your own family history. On **Friday evening, September 6, 7:00 at the Mathews Museum**, she will discuss basic research techniques, share helpful hints, review ways to efficiently compile your family data, story and photographs and publish them. Black is an author and maintains a website and blog, focusing on history, genealogy and preservation projects. She currently serves as Project Manager for Timberneck, a Fairfield Foundation farmhouse restoration project at Machicomoco State Park in Gloucester. She is a Board Member and treasurer of The Fairfield Foundation, and on the board of Preservation Mathews, Inc, an organization that identifies at risk homes/ structures within the county and works to preserve or restore them. She travels extensively speaking on genealogy and is the principal and owner of LJB Professional Genealogy Services in Mathews, a full service genealogical and historical records research and consulting company. The Museum is pleased to be able to provide this program for the community. There is no charge for this event and the public is welcome.

Mathew Museum to Showcase Southern Quilts from Private Collection

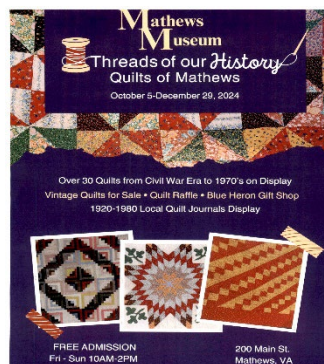


A special quilting exhibit, **“Threads of Our History: Quilts of Mathews Virginia,”** will debut at the Mathews Museum, **Saturday, October 5** and will be on exhibit through the end of December. These quilts are from a private collection of an old Mathews family, going back over a century. Mathews is a small, rural southern county sitting on the Chesapeake Bay. The quilts reflect their utilitarian use, in a geographic area that was fairly isolated until the 1950s. The quilts honor a southern tradition of quilting when scraps of fabric or clothing were used to make bedding when the family needed it. Southern quilts have their own identity, with their use of color, size of pieces, and choice of fabric, which was primarily cotton and feedbags.

The current holders of this very special collection are Mathew’s residents Jay Black, a financial advisor with Davenport & Co. and his wife, Lori Jackson Black, a genealogist and historian, who are pleased to be able to share this treasured collection with the public at the upcoming special exhibit.

“These quilts represent the life of Polly Brooks Diggs (1814-1988) and her sister Maron Diggs (1878-1982) as well as other women in the Diggs family who worked together to provide quilts to their extended family and friends in Mathews County,” says Lori Jackson Black. Lori continues, “Carole Diggs Hindman, the most recent owner of the collection, passed away in 2018 and it was left to my husband, Jay, to manage the property, which she had inherited from her parents, J. Martin and Leon Hudgins Diggs. Before Carole passed away, she had given us the last quilt that Polly made, along with a note on it with additional information.”

Lori recounts their discovery of the trove of quilts, “At the Hindman house, all three bedrooms had a quilt on the bed, and we found many more in each closet. We then went into the attic where we found more, along with several handmade wool comforters. We feel blessed to be able to share these family heirlooms with the public.” Some of the items on display will include a baby quilt of Jay’s, and also one bed quilt made especially for him. More than 30 quilts were counted, with many of them being included in the exhibit. Accompanying the exhibit will be descriptions of the quilts, letters and notes and photographs. There is a private showing on Thursday, October 3 for Mathews Museum members. And beginning October 4th, the museum will be open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday through the end of December. The Mathews Museum is proud and excited to be able to display this exceptional piece of Mathews’ history. For information on special tours, contact 804-695-4664 or email mathewsvamuseumfriends@gmail.com. For Museum hours and additional information, visit www.mathewsvamuseum.org.



ONGOING AT THE MUSEUM NOW!

New Civil War Military Music Display



A special collection on loan by Museum President Tom Robinson, is a display of musical instruments from the Civil War, accompanied by interesting stories. Tom plays the bugle on special occasions, and also is a member of the Gloucester Community Orchestra.

RECENT EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM

“New” General Store Opens in Mathews



General stores and post offices were both a mainstay and a way of life in Mathews County years ago. They were the gathering spots and the epicenters of each of the respective communities throughout the county.

On Saturday, June 22, 10:00 am until 2:00 pm, Mathews “newest general store” opened its doors to the public. The Tommy Hunley General Store/post office received its first official customers at the opening reception at the Mathews Museum, 200 Main Street, where the new general store is now an official permanent exhibit. Ray Hunley, longtime commissioner of revenue in Mathews, donated both a significant collection of his father’s general store/post office memorabilia as well as many hours of his personal time, lovingly and patiently recreating a “mini” general store within the walls of the Museum. Years ago, Ray’s father, Tommy Hunley, was an employee of the Virginia Power Company, and as part of his job, he would travel throughout the county, visiting the various general stores, and meeting with the owners. As time went by, and the general stores closed, he would acquire much of the products and artifacts from the stores and store them in his own one room building on Church Street.

“All of the contents of this store were original, no reproductions. He had visitors from all over the world visit his store over the years, including two Virginia Governors,” said Ray Hunley. “ He was highlighted on two evening news shows on Wavy TV and WTKR TV. It was his wish that the contents be preserved and made available to the citizens of Mathews as a memory of past times. Many of the contents are one-of-a-kind or one-of-a-few.”

Tommy Hunley passed away in 2005, and his wish was to continue the memories and share the history. Ray and his wife Doris felt that the collection could best be displayed at the Museum. The general store exhibit now officially resides within the walls of the Mathews Museum and will now be open to the public, honoring Tommy Hunley’s wishes. The Museum held the store’s grand opening on Saturday, June 22nd. Museum President Tom Robinson says, “Mathews Museum is pleased and honored to own this collection, and we want the museum to be a real place to visit in Mathews.

A Revolutionary Tea Party and Fashion Show at the Mathews Museum



In conjunction with the VA250 American Revolution activities in Mathews, the Mathews Museum hosted Martha Washington and Abigail Adams as they “spilled the tea,” Sunday, August 18 to a sold-out event! As a part of the afternoon’s activities, guests spent a lovely time with "Ladies Victorian" as they presented "Our Founding Mothers and What They Wore." Martha Washington and Abigail Adams, as interpreters of colonial times, were attired in period clothing and showed how to wear the finishing touches of reticules, tussie mussies, paletots, and chatelains that were needed to complement their fine hostess gowns." Ladies Victorian" is a company founded by two history buffs and talented couturiers, Marilyn Iglesias and Kim Forslund. These two fashionistas of 18th century couturier met twenty years ago when they worked as docents at historical museums in Newport News. They were joined by Generals Thomas Mathews and Andrew Lewis, who made special guest appearances as revolutionary gentlemen.

We at the Mathews Museum want to wish everyone a Safe & Happy Labor Day Weekend!

“No great achievement is possible without persistent work”,

Bertrand Russell

