Mathews County Historical Society, Inc.

Spring 2021 Newsletter

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

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE PAST

Tompkins Cottage Museum Renovations Are In Progress!

With the return of more moderate weather, Mathews County Building Department has been busily engaged in repairing the deterioration the Tompkins Cottage has sustained over the years. For a variety of reasons, the cottage has always had moisture issues: the building lacks a subfloor, is located less than five feet above sea level in the AE Flood Zone alongside Put-In Creek and is vulnerable to tidal flooding and storm surges. It sits on poorly-drained soils and is affected by site-wide dampness due to the heavily saturated ground.

Southside deterioration of the Tompkins Cottage back door.

To avoid further damage, rotten clapboard siding and window and door sills are being replaced. Wet insulation has been removed; windows have been sealed. Doors are being reworked. Once exterior repairs have been made, the cottage will be repainted.

Future work includes repair of the crumbling brick and mortar of the piers and chimney and repair of the damaged plaster on the inside. A request for raising Tompkins Cottage out of the flood zone was submitted to the county and will be addressed in a future budget.

In March, the Mathews County Building Department began repair work on Tompkins Cottage. From left to right, Tim Tillage and Glen Scatchard replaced damaged siding, sills and insulation on the east side of the building.

President's Message

Reed Lawson

My! My! My! What a time we have all had! With the warmer temperatures and promise (hope) of improved conditions to come, the society is perched, ready to spring forward!

The exciting news on the horizon is the completion of the restoration work on New Point Comfort Lighthouse. It has taken twenty years from Earl Soles' initiation of the plan with the county to save the lighthouse until this summer when it becomes a reality. How to commemorate and celebrate this accomplishment has not been decided, but the society will certainly play a role in the process.

Other exciting news is the repair work on the exterior of Tompkins Cottage. Rotten siding and sills are being replaced and doors repaired with painting to follow – a new look for 2021. Building official Kevin Zoll and Glen Scatchard are to be thanked for their determination to get this work done despite a full schedule of county projects. Interior work and the potential raising of the cottage out of the flood zone will be addressed in future county budgets. By the way, the county did extend our lease for the cottage for another five years – on a 5-0 vote!

The news still on hold is the awarding of the grant for the raising of Thomas James Store. The National Park Service/Department of Historic Resources has not reported out, as yet, but the society has crossed all Ts and dotted all Is regarding accepting Federal grant money. Will keep you posted.

The 2021 'Annual Meeting and Dinner', via the last newsletter, was, I suppose, one way to conduct business, but I much prefer all getting together and having a good meal, maybe even with a glass of wine. Many thanks go to members who responded to the balloting. The results were: approval of the 2020 Annual Meeting minutes, the adoption of the 2021 Proposed Budget and election of the slate of officers and vacancies on the Board of Directors. 2021 officers are Reed Lawson – president, Martha McCartney – vice president, Trish Reed – secretary and Hunt Thompson – treasurer. For the Class of 2023, Linda Bradford, Tom Karow, Mary Pope and Nancy Twigg were elected. And for the vacancy in the Class of 2022, Liz Bateman. Sadly, Linda has resigned since the election. We will certainly miss her wise council and enthusiasm. And we say goodbye to Sandy Warhol after six years of service. Sandy, your input, fresh ideas and insight were invaluable. Thank you! We welcome Liz and Mary and the newly-elected returning board members as they begin their terms. Thank you for your willingness to serve to benefit the society.

On the horizon: NPCL commemoration and celebration, continuance of work on Book 5 of *Historic Homes and Properties of Mathews County, Virginia Pre-Civil War,* a 2021 ornament, Solstice party – or some such at an a appropriate time, Fall programs and Music on Maple in October.

In the meantime, the Board of Directors continues to Zoom ahead! Please let us know of any ideas you may have for events and programs!

MCHS BOARD

Reed Lawson, *President*
Martha McCartney, *Vice President*
Trish Reed, *Secretary*
Hunt Thompson, *Treasurer*

Class of 2021
Al DeWitt
Trish Reed
Ray Stubblebine
Hunt Thompson

Class of 2022
Liz Bateman
Bobbi Hatton
Reed Lawson
Martha McCartney

Class of 2023
Tom Karow
Mary Pope
Nancy Twigg

Standing Committees
Tom Karow, *Education*
TBD, *Buildings & Grounds*
Becky Barnhardt, *Market Days*
Hunt Thompson, *Membership*
Nancy Twigg, *Nominating*
Bobbi Hatton, *Programs*
Bobbi Hatton & Trish Reed, *Publications*
Becky Barnhardt, *Publicity*

Ad Hoc Committees
Martha McCartney, *Editorial*
Becky Morgan, *Ornaments*
TBD, *Social*

Positions
Reed Lawson, *Archivist*
Becky Barnhardt, *Curator*
Reed Lawson, *Docent Coordinator*
Becky Barnhardt, *Newsletter*
Hunt Thompson, *Registered Agent*
Becky Barnhardt, *Webmaster & FaceBook Admin*

MCHS recently held its 2021 Annual Meeting by Newsletter and elected by ballot its 2021 officers and new members of the Board of Directors. Those who could gather on a cool March day for a photo op at Thomas James Store were, left to right, Bobbi Hatton, Mary Pope, president Reed Lawson, treasurer Hunt Thompson, Liz Bateman, Ray Stubblebine and vice president Martha McCartney. Absent when photograph taken were Al DeWitt, Tom Karow, Trish Reed and Nancy Twigg.

Tompkins Cottage Museum opened for the season on a bright, beautiful April 3rd. Welcoming visitors for self-guided tours were docents, left to right, Martha McCartney, Reed Lawson and Liz Bateman. Martha, the author of the MCHS publication *Mathews County, Virginia Lost Landscapes, Untold Stories*, was on hand to sign copies of this comprehensive history of Mathews County.

MCHS Road Warriors — Bobbi Hatton, Fred Wynn, Reed Lawson, Hunt Thompson and Trish Reed picked up trash on April 10th along Tabernacle Road.

Tom Wiatt of Newport News, author of Capt. Sally A Biography of Capt. Sally Tompkins, America's First Female Army Officer, was on hand Saturday, April 17 for a book signing. Joining him at Tompkins Cottage are, left, Bernadine Teague, owner of Poplar Grove, Capt. Sally's ancestral home, and Tompkins Cottage docent Jackie Wilton.

In Memoriam

Long-time member and donor Amanda Dillon Taylor passed away January 28, 2021 in Williamsburg where she and Jim moved last September. She is back here with us at her beloved Christ Church under magnificent oaks and alongside the Kousa dogwoods that she and Jim contributed to the church grounds. Amanda, as chair of Mathews County Visitor and Information Center Board of Directors was instrumental years back in the society acquiring Thomas James Store and the land on which it sits. Our heartfelt condolences to Jim and their family. *Pax vobiscum*.

Amanda Dillon Taylor

Digital Archives

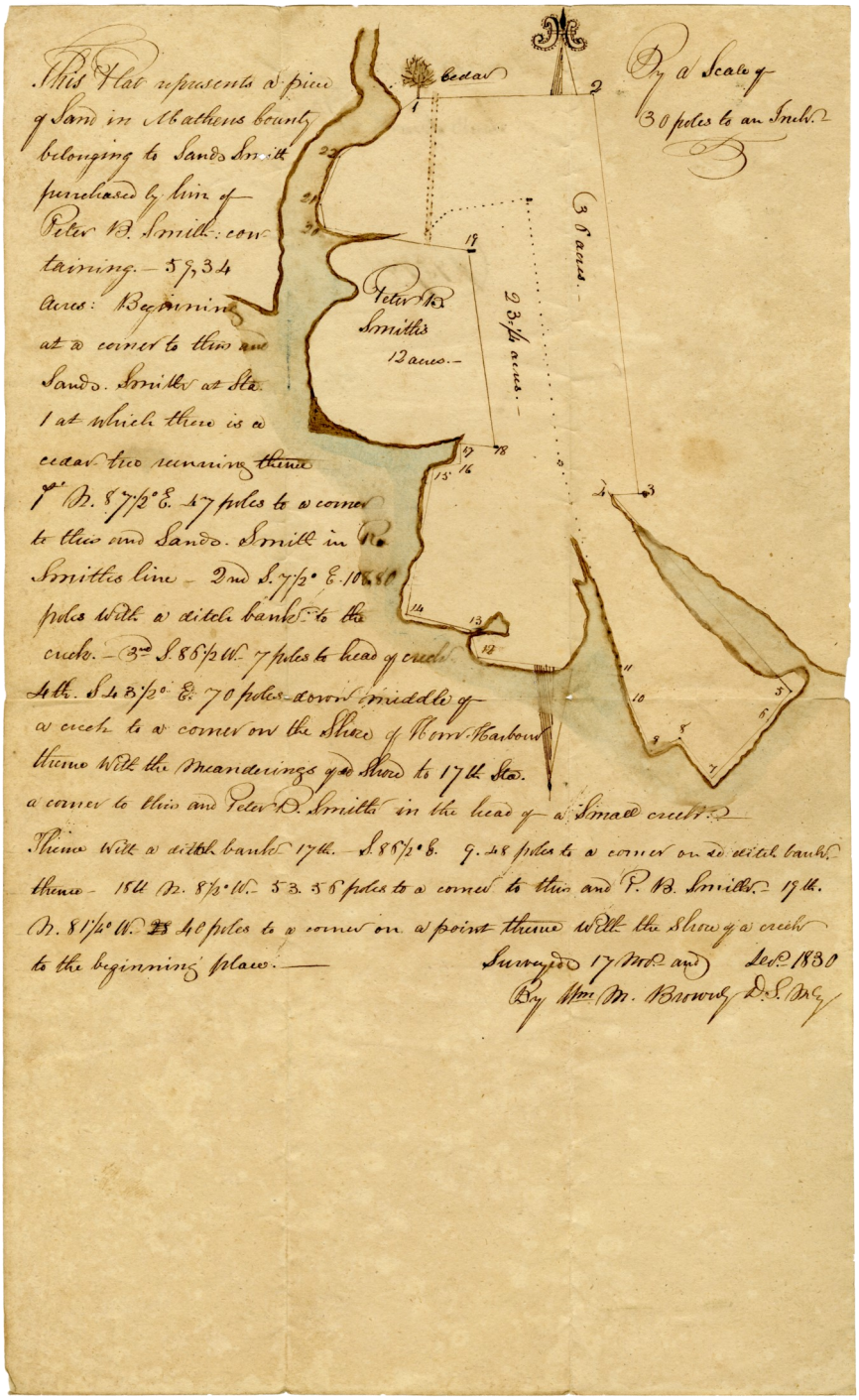
Mathews Memorial Library

In February 2021, the Mathews Memorial Library began scanning items in the Mathews Archives to be placed in the library's online Digital Archives. The Archives is a partnership between the library and the Mathews County Historical Society.

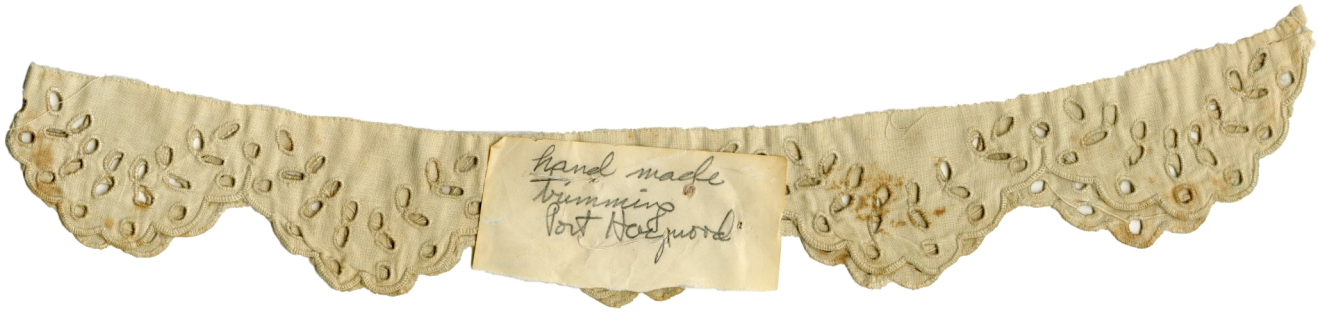
The Digital Archives is intended to give open access to researchers to learn more about Mathews County and our rich history. The collection is a very small fraction of the archive's physical holdings, with new materials continually being scanned and added. Every effort is made to portray true color and likeness without any editing. All items are described, all can be downloaded, and all can be cited in your research.

A keyword search is available, and it is possible to browse the collections by subject or form. The Mathews Memorial Library actively reviews and labels materials in our archives with statements that indicate how you may reuse the images, and what sort of permission, if any, you need to do so.

Digital archives play a vital role in preserving a lifelong record of historical materials for generations to come.



Plat showing land - 59.34 acres - sold by Peter B. Smith to Sands Smith along Horn Harbor shoreline. William M. Browny was the surveyor, dated 17 November 1830. The fee was $9.87.



19th century handmade cotton eyelet lace trim with a scallop edge was made in Port Haywood.

St. John's Episcopal Church was built in 1898, and consecrated on April 8, 1899 by Robert A. Gibson, Bishop Coadjutor of Virginia. The church remained in service until 1930 and was dismantled in 1954. It was used mainly for Sunday night services in its later years and for occasional services only.

Primary school children in front of Milford Haven School during the spring of 1930. The school closed after the 1939-1940 session and the property was sold to Mrs. Walter Rufus Stoakes (1879-1962). The building, currently a private residence, is located at 863 Haven Beach Road in Mathews County.

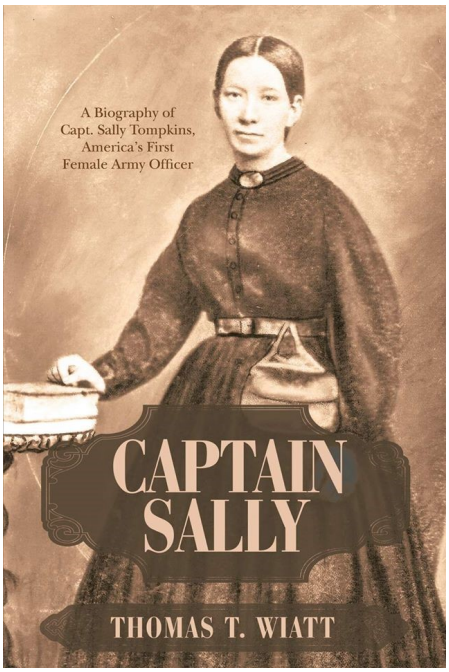
Cornelia A. Green (1860-1955) and Captain Azariah Edgar Thurston (1861-1943) were married in Mathews County, Virginia on 7 January 1883. The photograph is undated.

Access the Digital Archives

https://www.mathewslibrary.org/
Click on "Digital Archives" icon

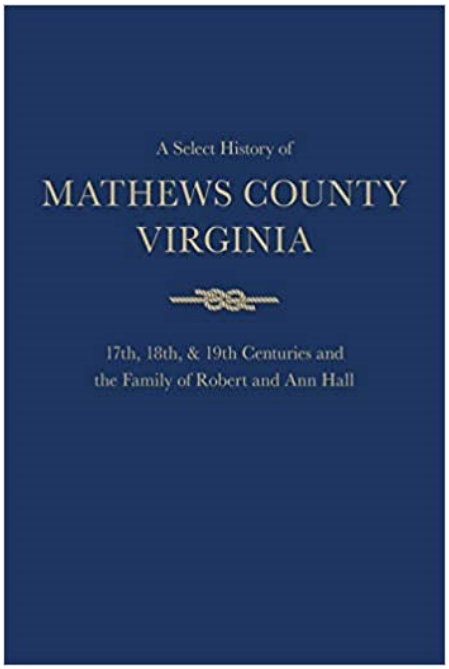
For further information contact:
Becky Foster Barnhardt
Head of History and Genealogy
Mathews Memorial Library
beckybarnhardt@mathewslibrary.org
804.725.5747

Captain Sally: A Biography of Capt. Sally Tompkins, America's First Female Army Officer by Thomas T. Wiatt
$10.00
Amazon



Sally Tompkins, a Mathews County native, was a very wealthy young woman who was a nurse that owned and ran her own private hospital in Richmond, Virginia during the American Civil War. The hospital had the highest survival rate of any hospital north or south. This statistic was even more remarkable considering that the worst cases were sent to her. She was also commissioned as Captain in the Confederate Cavalry because, by law, all hospitals had to be under military rule to be able to receive medical supplies. She took her rank seriously. She was adored by the Confederate troops and received probably hundreds of marriage proposals, all of which she declined. It was said that "her strength of mind and character took the place of more frivolous charms." Capt. Sally Tompkins demonstrated that women were capable of doing so many things that, in this time period, women were thought incapable of doing. As a hospital administrator, she challenged gender expectations and helped to expand the role of women in all management positions.

A Select History of Mathews County, Virginia: 17th, 18th & 19th Centuries and The Family of Ann and Robert Hall by Conrad Mercer Hall
$35.00
Amazon



This book is a selected history of Mathews County, Virginia, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and prior to 1791 an area known as Kingston Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia. It begins with a detailed analysis of original land patents and settlement patterns including a listing of all families and names of headrights. The social and economic development during the colonial period is explored including demographic information, agriculture, and labor systems utilizing indentured servants and African slaves. Chapters devoted to the Revolutionary War include the local militia, the Battle of Gwynn's Island, and the formation and activities of the Virginia State Navy. Original sources, including logbooks of the British navy, are used to present a detailed account of Revolutionary War naval activity in the vicinity of Mathews County. Shipbuilding, agriculture, and other economic factors are explored during the years preceding the Civil War, including the War of 1812. Genealogical histories of Robert and Ann Hall and their descendants are woven into the narrative as an example of an average family of the times. The book is designed to appeal to students of Tidewater Virginia and Mathews and Gloucester Counties and family historians in search of a rigorous analysis of the Hall family of Mathews County, Virginia.

Mathews County Historical Society Membership Application

A friendly reminder - Our membership dues are renewable January 1st of each year!

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____ Date_____

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 an additional gift to the preservation, collection & interpretation of Mathews County history:

_____ Researcher of MCHS, under $100
_____ Friend of MCHS, $100
_____ Benefactor of MCHS, $250
_____ Historian of MCHS, $1000

To benefit:

_____ Mathews Archives Fund
_____ New Point Comfort Lighthouse Preservation Fund
_____ Thomas James Store Fund
_____ Publications Fund
_____ General Fund
_____ Tompkins Cottage Preservation Fund

$ _____ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

Thank you for your interest and support of the Mathews County Historical Society. Please make your 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

Like us on facebook

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

MCHS belongs to:

Virginia Genealogical Society VGS Founded 1960

vam

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION of MUSEUMS

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

2021 Mathews County Museum Calendar

Gwynn's Island Museum
Fridays, Saturdays & Sundays, April – October
1 p.m.-5p.m.

Mathews Historical Museum
Saturdays, Markets on Main and for Special Events

Mathews Maritime Museum
Fridays & Saturdays, May – November
10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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

Tompkins Cottage Museum
Saturdays, April – October
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Mathews Market Days
TBD
Holiday Open House
Saturday, December 11th
10 a.m.-1 p.m.

2021 Mathews County Events Calendar

Markets on Main
3rd Saturday, April-August | 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Mathews Market Days
TBD

Community Christmas Tree Lighting
TBD

Christmas Farmers Market
Saturday, December 11th | 9 am.-1 p.m.

Mathews Christmas Parade
TBD