

THE MUSEUM NEWS

CELEBRATING THE HISTORY AND COMMUNITY OF CAPE CHARLES
& LOWER EASTERN SHORE

CAPE CHARLES HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
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Museum Activity: Exhibits & Visitors

Due to the pandemic we clearly could not have the museum open daily as usual. However, CCHS president John Griffith decided despite personal health challenges to keep the museum open himself -- on Saturdays from 10 to 4 starting July 11. Results have been gratifying. Through the end of September we have had more than 300 visitors, averaging nearly 30 each Saturday. Visitors have worn masks, respected social distancing, used hand cleanser, purchased books and other shop items, and left generous donations. The exhibits are the traditional ones on Cape Charles history including the crater, steamers, ferries, railroads, and town life. Several colorful railroad artifacts acquired when the railroad yard closed are now on display. In early September Laura Smith created an additional exhibit featuring the locally famous Jefferson Store. It features family and shop photos, revealing documents from the time, and a frock coat of the style available in the early days of his store, one of which Mr. Jefferson was known to wear.

Due to covid-19, it is not feasible to hold our ever popular November Oyster Roast fundraiser. We will be holding a yard sale on Oct 10 open to other vendors at \$10 a table.

Memberships & Finances

As of this writing we have 213 memberships. We greatly appreciate our longtime supporting members as well as the new members. To beat our record 234 memberships of 2019, please renew now if you have not yet, or take out a new membership. In July we added Cape Charles resident and local historian Laura Smith to the board. Laura brings proficiency in online tools and is an enthusiastic writer with a deep love of local history. Financially, our cash balance has recovered from the expenses of building restoration and railroad expenses incurred in 2019, thanks to many generous memberships and donations. A financial review was

conducted by local accountant Jerry Murphy and presented to a group of board members in August. Digital copies of the review are available upon request.

Online Presence

Increasingly important these days, covid-19 or not is our online presence. In April, board member Mike Ash assumed management of our web site, Capecharlesmuseum.org. which contains a wealth of information about the museum and local history. It also enables memberships and donations by credit card, and general inquiries. Also very important are our Facebook and Instagram sites, which board member Laura Smith has taken on. All three sites are updated frequently; past newsletters are also included on the web site. Please visit all these spots, and use Amazon Smile to donate a percentage of your Amazon purchases to CCHS.

Our Facebook page is Cape Charles Museum and Welcome Center @CapeCharlesMuseumandWelcomeCenter. Instagram page is [capecharlesmuseum_history](https://www.instagram.com/capecharlesmuseum_history).

Arlington

South of Cape Charles is Arlington, site of a manor house built in 1670 by John Custis II, and Custis Tomb (his remains) which adjoins it. The sites and excavated artifacts were owned by the Arlington foundation since the 1990s. However, with the death of many of its key members, in 2017 the foundation decided to dissolve and offered CCHS ownership of the two sites; the artifacts became the property of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. At the time, it seemed like something sufficiently related to our mission and that we could manage. Transfer of the properties, however, required completion of Deed of Gift Conservation Easements by the Dept of Historic Resources, a process which has dragged on since 2016. By 2019, given our current priorities and financial situation the board decided that it was not prudent to accept this offer and made the foundation aware of our deci-

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John Griffith, President
Dora Sullivan, Vice President
Brittany Cannon, Secretary
Marion Naar, Treasurer

sion. Exhibit panels and associated artifacts may be displayed from time to time. We wish the Arlington Foundation success in finding a good owner for the sites which are so important to Virginia history.

Cape Charles Walking Tours

Once again we have republished the popular Cape Charles Walking Tour brochure. Last issued in 1995, the new edition reflects changes to business use of several properties and B&Bs. As a step toward a possible online version of the tour, we obtained funds from a Northampton County Tourism grant to create an online virtual tour of the museum grounds. With the presence of our seven rail cars, the jetty house, Bloxom Station, and the museum building itself, it makes for a good socially distancing tour. We are gradually adding signage describing the use and history of each of the cars. Thanks to an offer by Joseph Garvey of The Sign Company in Waterford NJ we now have the first locomotive sign in place, with several more in process.

Unsubscribe

Please, if you no longer wish to receive the newsletters, let us know. Just send us a quick email to ccmuseum@hughes.net or call the museum 757-331-1008.

Railroad Artifacts

In addition to the rail cars acquired from the closure of the Cape Charles railroad yard, more than 100 individual objects and many groups of photos and documents were gathered and subsequently imaged and catalogued in the Collections Database. The items fall into seven major groups: signs and signals; tools; locomotive parts and equipment; forms, manuals, office accessories, and a variety of photographs, surveys and charts. Here are some highlights.

Signs and signals: 'REPORT EMERGENCY', 'WARNING: CLOSE CLEARANCE DO NOT RIDE SIDE OR TOP OF CAR', RR signal flag, 4-way reflective panel signs, RR signal crossing bell, mile markers; Tools: wrenches, cargo hook for boxcar, viscosity comparator used to test viscosity in oil or hydraulic fluid, metal rule gauge, RR spike hammer, red RR signaling device box labeled 'FUSEES & TORPEDOS', pressure test gun, railroad car coupler; Locomotive parts and equipment: bell, whistle, 3 air horns, brake shoes, head lamps, engine identification tags, headlight control and emergency fuel cutoff plates, control panel parts, locomotive valve and hydraulic pumps, voltage regulator, CP-Speed Recorder metal with round glass window, Forms: Damaged Car Report, ESHR Injury Report, ESHR Vehicle/Equip. Maintenance Record, Daily Locomotive Inspection Report, Interchange Time Verification sheet, Reportable Conditions Safety Committee form No. 621, Employee Examination Verification Forms. Manuals: Inspection Manual, Operating Manual GP-19 SEMTA 904 Locomotive, Engine Maintenance GM Model 567c, EMD Electromotive Rebuild Ordering Guide 1993, Eastern Shore Railroad Policy Manual, Bay Towing Corporation Information Booklet, Maintenance Repair Parts Tool List, 1945 American Railway Engineers Association Construction & Maintenance Manual With Illustrations & Pull Outs, 1977 Revised Manual of Investigation And Discipline Procedures; Office accessories: wooden inbox with about 30 slots, RR document stamps, receipt bill holder, lapel pins, keys, and the NYP&N vintage safe on display at the museum including its combination.

Recent "Large" Archival Donations

Thanks to Bill Neville and the generosity of Eyre Baldwin, the museum is now the owner of one of the huge cleats used to secure the lines of railroad steamers to the ferry dock in the harbor. The cleat is now on the front porch of the museum. CCHS member Linda Wiles donated several railroad items: a PRR bell and NYP&N baggage tag in memory of her husband Kent Griffith.

Stephen Gedney

We were saddened to learn of the death of Stephen Gedney last November. Stephen became CEO of the Eastern Shore Railroad in the 1980s and for several other railroads in 1990 and beyond. Steve and Linda have been

Books, Books, & Videos

A couple of museum board members have been working diligently to be able to republish 'Cape Charles: A Railroad Town' by Jim Lewis, classmate and lifelong friend of Bill Neville. Published in 2004 by Hickory House in Eastville, hundreds of copies were sold – until they ran out in 2019 and Hickory House was closed due to owner Frances Latimer's death. CCHS is working to obtain publishing rights and make the book available for sale at the museum and at local book retailers.

Recently published and on sale at the museum is another book from Arcadia Publishing: 'Railroads of Delmarva: A Pictorial History' by Douglas Poore. Other books underway include a memoir by Tom Godwin entitled 'Invisible History: Growing Up Colored in Cape Charles, VA', with a local author; 'Railroads of the Eastern Shore' by Loretta Treese, author of several other railroading books, due out in the spring. Also in process is a history of the Eyre Family by noted historian Carl Lounsbury. On the video front, Jim Garrison is completing Episode 6 of his VFC videos, all available on YouTube – search for Virginia Ferry Corporation under his name. Laura Smith has added more blogs and videos to her Sundayhistorical.com website. We are pleased to have furnished digital images of archival photos for these endeavors.

Farmers Market

The Cape Charles Farmers Market at the museum operated from 2016 through 2019. Initiated and managed by former executive director Kimb Denny and a dedicated group of volunteers, it was a big success in its first 3 years with as many as 28 vendors and hundreds of customers during the growing season. Our market was unique in offering and subsidizing SNAP which, though not heavily utilized, benefited lower income residents. However attendance dropped in 2019, and even before covid-19 hit we decided not to continue it in 2020. Our market was one of the first to show that there is significant interest in fresh, local produce and meats by residents and visitors. By 2019 several new markets and roadside stands came into being.

Rotary Project

As with the more recently acquired rail cars, our caboose and baggage car also need work. A few years ago CCHS member Bob Sellers restored and repaired much of the car's interior as it is a popular spot for visitors, but now the exterior needs paint and other repairs. Last year we had an offer from the Cape Charles Rotary Club to provide volunteers to help paint and restore it. This offer has been on hold due to covid-19 restrictions, but we are now ready to proceed. We are hoping to work with a local business for the donation (or subsidy) of appropriate paint and other supplies for the project. The United Way has already donated \$500. As part of the project, we need to have some of the trees that overhang the caboose and other cars trimmed to reduce the chance of sap and mildew on the fresh paint. All of the other cars and the locomotive need to be painted; any other volunteer help would be most appreciated. Just let us know.