



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2022-23

The Museum of Culpeper History

113 S. Commerce St.
Culpeper, VA 22701

Director's Message

Culpeper County has played a central role in Virginia's history. Significant aspects of Culpeper history include the Culpeper Minutemen, the Germanna settlement, the county's role during the Civil War, John S. Barbour Jr. and the establishment of the Orange & Alexandria railroad, the Rappahannock Canal, equine sports, and a long history of successful and extensive African-American entrepreneurship in a rural southern county dating to the mid-19th century. Despite its significance to Virginia history, Culpeper County has not been the subject of much serious historical research. What has been written about the county's history concentrates on the colonial and Civil War periods.

The Museum of Culpeper History is the primary repository of material objects related to the history of Culpeper County. The museum's collections also contain significant visual resources in terms of photographic materials, prints, and paintings. The museum primarily serves Culpeper County residents through its exhibits, collections, and programming, and also attracts considerable visitation from residents from surrounding counties and out-of-state tourists.

The museum seeks to serve and educate our visitor base through a variety of different exhibits, programs, and events throughout the year. In addition to our permanent exhibition, we install rotating exhibits each year using objects drawn from our collection and from outside loans, which we supplement with related lectures, gallery talks, and other programs.

The vast majority of museums across the United States are still struggling with the aftershocks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 60% of American museums continue to experience declining visitation and revenues. Small, independently-run community museums have been particularly hard hit.

The museum attained its highest attendance and outreach level ever in 2019 before the pandemic, reaching over 11,700 people. Thanks to the support of its membership, its generous donor base, and the community, as well as the efforts of its staff, volunteers, and Board Members, the museum reached nearly 11,000 people in the past fiscal year while maintaining its donation and fundraising levels. The Museum of Culpeper History continues to enjoy the success it experienced prior to the pandemic and anticipates continued future growth.

The museum's immediate future promises continued excitement. Short-term plans include exhibits, tours, and programs contributing to the upcoming America 250 commemoration, revitalizing our membership, and continued expansion of our educational offerings. In addition, we look toward larger projects such as updating our permanent displays, growing our staff and volunteers, and providing for continued financial security.

-John Christiansen, Executive Director

Board of Directors

The following individuals served on the Board of Directors of the Museum of Culpeper History in FY2022-23:

Ms. Elizabeth Hutchins, President | Ms. Rice Wagner, Vice President | Mr. David Durr, Treasurer | Mr. Charles Jameson, Secretary | Mr. James Bish | Mr. David Foster | Mr. Andrew Gutowski | Mr. Craig Jebson | Mr. William Lewis | Ms. Diane Morris | Mr. Dewayne Payne | Ms. Janie Schmidt (Ex Officio representing the Town of Culpeper)

Our Mission

The Museum of Culpeper History collects, preserves, interprets, and promotes the history of Culpeper by engaging diverse audiences and educating visitors to create an increased understanding of the significant historical events that occurred locally and formed the community we know today.

Fiscal Year 2022-23 At A Glance



7,400+ Visitors



33 Programs



1,100+ Volunteer Hours



3,800+ Social Media Followers



\$57,000 in Donations

Financial Summary

The museum continues to grow through generous private and organizational donations, successful fundraising, increased revenue from programs, and support from our endowment.

REVENUE

- Donations: \$57,313
- Admission & Programs: \$18,482
- Other Income: \$7,628
- Grants: \$27,915
- Fundraising: \$22,127

TOTAL: \$133,645

EXPENSES

- Museum Programs & Services: \$4,576
- Preservation: \$8,965
- Fundraising: \$8,232
- Operations: \$99,561

TOTAL: \$121,164

Education & Outreach

The museum has faced challenges in educational programming over the past fiscal year, beginning the term after a three-month vacancy in its part-time educator position. The museum welcomed former teacher Jayne Hall as Education Coordinator in July 2022; unfortunately, Ms. Hall departed in early October to pursue other opportunities. After a long candidate search, Christine Wuebker took over the Education Coordinator position in February 2023. Ms. Wuebker brought over ten years of museum-related experience at institutions such as the Valentine Museum, Pamplin Park, and Montpelier and quickly demonstrated creativity and initiative in drafting new programming and expanding existing activities. The museum restructured her position at the end of the fiscal year to bring her on as a full-time employee.



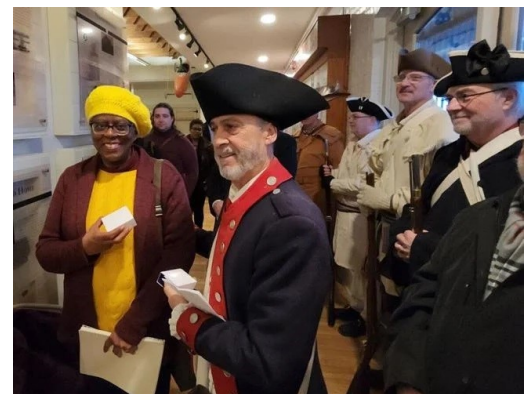
During this period, the museum continued its grant-funded monthly program for preschoolers, originally named Hands on History but rebranded this year as Little Learners. This program has been very successful, with most sessions filled by advance reservation. Session offerings have been doubled at this time to meet demand.

A new all-age interactive series was given the Hands on History title in spring 2023 and has been offered monthly since.

The museum offered monthly walking tours of downtown Culpeper in summer 2022 and is repeating the series for 2023. In addition, the museum partnered with Culpeper Battlefield Tours, the American Battlefield Trust, and the Culpeper Department of Tourism and Economic Development to offer a bus tour of the Kelly's Ford Battlefield in March 2023.

Once again, the museum partnered with Luck Stone to host tours of the dinosaur tracks located at Luck's Culpeper plant in September 2022. Approximately 1,000 visitors of all ages visited the quarry during the popular event. The event will be repeated in 2023 and expanded to a two-day event.

In addition, the museum participated in activities sponsored by community organizations such as the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce, Culpeper Renaissance Inc., Culpeper Battlefield Tours, the Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield, the Friends of Culpeper Battlefields, and the Right the Record Project. These programs included Culpeper Carnival, Downtown Culpeper 1st Fridays, the reenactments of the battles of Cedar Mountain and Brandy Station, Culpeperpalooza, and Culpeperfest. Over 5,200 people were reached through these outreach activities.



Exhibits

The museum installed four new exhibits in the past fiscal year, including the art of Sue Linthicum in July 2022, Spring in Culpeper featuring the art of the Blue Ridge Art League in March 2023, and “Culpeper Minute Man Chapter NSDAR: 100 Years of Service” at the end of June 2023.

As part of Downtown Culpeper 1st Fridays, the museum received permission to open and interpret the caboose on Commerce Street. The outlook for future programs utilizing this space is promising.



In addition, the museum revitalized and reopened its Children’s Discovery Zone in May 2023 with the new “Dino Dig Box” as its centerpiece.

Projects

The museum received funding to conduct a Collections Assessment Report, which will produce a plan to guide a larger full-scale audit of the museum’s collections. This report will be prepared by the consultants of Museum Collection Consulting at the start of the next fiscal year.



The museum applied for and received county funding to install a series of three historical markers throughout Culpeper County recognizing the local importance of the Norman Grocery, Zimmermann’s tavern, and Rixeyville. With private contributions and its own funds, the museum will also erect a marker noting the location of Culpeper’s original courthouse in time for the 250th anniversary of the Culpeper Resolves. The markers will be similar in appearance to Virginia’s state historic highway markers and bear the museum’s logo.

Fundraising & Development

The museum’s primary fundraising efforts consist of its fall History Alfresco dinner, an end-of-year appeal, and participation in the regional Give Local Piedmont campaign administered through the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation (NPCF). October 2023’s History Alfresco raised \$7800 over expenses. The museum folded its annual membership renewal campaign and Heritage Cabinet Fund contributions into 2024’s spring Give Local Piedmont campaign to take advantage of matching funds through NPCF, raising over \$19,000.

The museum also received \$35,750 in grant funding for operations and special projects from the Town of Culpeper, Culpeper County, and the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation.

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Society for the Preservation of Culpeper History

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Northern Piedmont Community Foundation

PATH Foundation

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