

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

As we begin 2026, I want to take a moment to say thank you to our members. Your enthusiasm and dedication are what keep our Historical Society active, growing, and relevant, and I'm truly grateful for all that you do.

Looking back on the past year, we were reminded that history isn't just something we read about, it's something we care for together. We enjoyed a wonderful lineup of programs, including lectures exploring Virginia's historic waterways and two memorable bus trips to Virginia Beach and French's Tavern in Powhatan. Whether you attended lectures, volunteered your time at events, or traveled with us on bus trips, you played an important role in helping us preserve and share our local history.

As we look ahead to 2026, there's a lot to be excited about. Our Sunday Lecture Series will continue at the historic Kimball Theatre, and we're planning new events and experiences, including a day in Olde Towne Portsmouth. We're also looking forward to recognizing our nation's Semiquincentennial, a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past and its lasting impact today.

We hope you'll stay involved, bring a friend, and share your ideas with us as we move into the new year. Thank you for being part of our community. I wish you a happy, healthy, and history-filled New Year.

Warm regards,
Paige Jessee, President

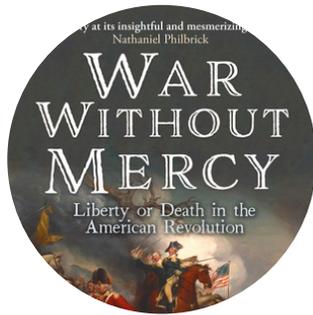
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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MAR	1	TVHS Sunday Lecture Series: Mark Edward Lender	AUG	19	TVHS Outing Bacon's Castle-The Archaeology of Bacon's Castle
APR	12	TVHS Sunday Lecture Series: Harvey Bakari	OCT	?	TVHS Sunday Lecture Series
MAY	7	Spring Bus Trip: Olde Towne Portsmouth	NOV	1	TVHS Sunday Lecture Series
MAY	13	TVHS Outing Bacon's Castle-Women's Perspectives on Bacon's Rebellion	TBD	?	Fall Bus Trip

What's Happening at TVHS

Sunday Lecture Series



Sunday, March 1, 2026 2:00PM

Mark Edward Lender - Author of *War Without Mercy: Liberty or Death in the American Revolution*
The Kimball Theatre

TVHS is pleased to welcome acclaimed historian and author Dr. Mark Edward Lender for a special preview of his forthcoming book, **War Without Mercy: Liberty or Death in the American Revolution**.

In this engaging and thought-provoking talk, Dr. Lender examines how the American Revolution became a brutal, all-or-nothing struggle in which “liberty or death” was not merely a slogan, but a stark reality. Drawing on firsthand accounts and lesser-known sources, he reveals a conflict marked by fierce loyalties, personal stakes, and a deep fear of defeat. From frontier violence to civil war in the backcountry, Dr. Lender sheds light on a harsher side of the Revolution often overlooked in popular memory, challenging the notion of a restrained or civilized war.

[Register Now!](#)



Sunday Lecture Series



Sunday, April 12, 2026 2:00 PM

Harvey Bakari - Curator of Black History and Culture, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation
The Kimball Theatre

TVHS is delighted to welcome Harvey Bakari, Curator of Black History and Culture at the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, for a behind-the-scenes look at how Virginia helped shape the political ideals and leadership of the United States from the colonial era through the early republic.

Mr. Bakari was co-curator of the acclaimed exhibition *Give Me Liberty: Virginia and the Forging of a Nation*, presented at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond from March 22, 2025, through January 4, 2026. The exhibition will reopen at the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown on July 1, 2026.

In this presentation, Mr. Bakari will share insights from his research and the curatorial process behind the exhibit, offering a deeper understanding of Virginia's central role in the nation's founding. Join us for an engaging exploration of history, scholarship, and exhibition design.

[Register Now!](#)





Step back in time on this one-of-a-kind, day-long excursion to Historic Olde Towne Portsmouth, led by celebrated interpreters John and Blondine Braidfoote. Through story, song, and expert interpretation, you'll experience four centuries of history set against the largest collection of standing period architecture between Alexandria and Charleston.

This immersive seven-hour experience features two guided walking tours complemented by six interior site visits along the way. Costumed interpreters portraying real figures from Portsmouth's rich and colorful past will help bring history vividly to life. You'll also enjoy two refreshment breaks, including a morning pastry with coffee and a late lunch. Best of all, weather permitting, once you arrive in Portsmouth, you won't reboard the bus until it's time to head home.

Your registration fee includes round-trip transportation, all tours and entrance fees, lunch, snacks, and gratuities, making this a truly carefree day of discovery. Non-members are welcome, and camaraderie is part of the experience—many lasting friendships have begun on TVHS trips!

Members pay just \$135.00 and Guests \$160.00. Space is limited to 50 guests, and trips fill quickly. Early registration is strongly encouraged.

[Register Now!](#)

Save the Dates

Join TVHS as we celebrate the 350th anniversary of Bacon's Rebellion.

Preservation Virginia will be offering TVHS a special group rate to attend selected programs featuring noted historians, archaeologist, anthropologists, and others.

Save the Dates:

- **May 13, 2026** – *Lecture & Tour*
 - *Women's Perspectives on Bacon's Rebellion*- Featuring Brenna Geraghty, Merry Outlaw, Beverly Straube, Ph.D., Amy Stallings, Ph.D., and Ashley Spivey, Ph.D. (Pamunkey)
- **August 19, 2026** – *Lecture*
 - *The Archaeology of Bacon's Rebellion*- Presented by Nicholas M. Lucchetti and Rebekah Planto, Ph.D.

Look for more information and registration details to come.

Membership Corner

Don't Let Your Membership Expire

Your dedicated support helps make our lectures, programs, and excursions possible. Thank you to all members who have already submitted their 2026 dues. If you have not yet had an opportunity to do so, please note that annual dues for the January–December 2026 membership year are due by January 1, 2026. We look forward to welcoming you at upcoming speaker events and on our future bus trips as we continue to explore and celebrate Tidewater Virginia history together.

How to renew your membership:

Pay by Check:

TVHS
P.O. BOX 427
Williamsburg, VA 23187
ATTN: Melissa McCue

Pay Online:

[Pay Now!](#)



New Members

Heather & Michael Gingras
Richard Knapp
Christine Moran
Neva Adams
Bob & Marisol Lambert
Judy & Raymond Beutel
Jim Black
Ann Smart Martin

Membership Stats

Total Memberships: 110
Total Members: 159

39 **Individual** memberships
38 **Couple** memberships
2 **Family** membership
8 **Century** memberships
23 **Lifetime** memberships

Century & Lifetime Members

A big SHOUT-OUT to Bessie Bierer, who has been a Century Member for an amazing seven years—thank you for your continued support! Century Members contribute \$60 more than an Individual membership, which helps offset the cost of our trips and the Kimball Theatre rental.

Being a Century (or Lifetime) member also comes with some nice perks:

- Reserved seating on bus trips
- A special outing or event just for Century and Lifetime members
- Two guest passes

In recent years, Century and Lifetime members enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of Fort Monroe (2025), a dinner with Randy Otto—aka Sir Winston Churchill (2024), and a special Jamestown event with Jefferson (2023).

Thanks to all our members for helping make TVHS such a great organization!

Want to join the Membership Team?

Janie Moyers would be happy to welcome you to her committee, and we're always open to new ideas and fresh perspectives.

Since 2013, TVHS has grown and thrived because of one essential force: you. Your membership, participation, and belief in our mission make it possible for us to serve our community, advocate for preservation, and continue to grow. We are deeply grateful for your commitment. As our programs and reach expand, we are arriving at an important milestone. For the first time, we are inviting members to consider making an optional, voluntary donation in addition to annual dues to help sustain and strengthen our work.

Membership dues remain the foundation of TVHS, ensuring access, belonging, and a shared voice. At the same time, rising costs and increasing demand—along with new opportunities to deepen our impact—mean that dues alone can no longer support all we aspire to do. Additional contributions would help advance preservation advocacy, protect endangered historic and archaeological resources, expand educational programs, and build long-term capacity across the Tidewater region.

Donations are entirely optional. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us. Together, guided by the belief that our history matters, we can continue protecting places, stories, and cultural heritage for generations to come.

How to donate?

Payable to **TVHS**
Memo: **Donation**

Checks:

TVHS
P.O. BOX 427
Williamsburg, VA 23187
ATTN: Melissa McCue

Online:

Coming Soon!

A Look Back at TVHS in 2025

The Tidewater Virginia Historical Society enjoyed a rewarding and engaging year in 2025, highlighted by dynamic programs, memorable travel experiences, and a strong sense of community among our members.

Our Sunday Lecture Series at the Kimball Theatre remained a cornerstone of TVHS programming, featuring four outstanding speakers who brought fresh insight and lively discussion to Virginia and Tidewater history. Topics ranged from aging in early America and Virginia's rich maritime heritage to Indigenous perspectives on Bacon's Rebellion and the vital role of James River batteaux in early commerce and transportation.

Beyond the lecture hall, members took part in two exceptional bus trips that brought history vividly to life. In the spring, a visit to Virginia Beach included stops at Cape Henry Lighthouse, Thoroughgood House, Lynnhaven House, and Ferry Plantation, deepening appreciation for the region's colonial and maritime roots. In the fall, members traveled to French's Tavern for a private tour, engaging interpretation by "young Thomas Jefferson," and a hands-on colonial cooking demonstration, followed by lunch and a celebratory toast.

Together, these experiences made 2025 a year of learning, discovery, and shared enjoyment. We are grateful to our speakers, hosts, volunteers, and members for sustaining a vibrant and thriving TVHS community.



Historic French's Tavern
September 24th, 2025

What people are saying about our bus trips...

"The French's Tavern visit gave travelers a wonderful experience giving us the opportunity to see a unique 18th century historic property."

David Olien



David Olien

"Thank you all for planning such an interesting & educational tour of French's Tavern. I thoroughly enjoyed myself. You all work so hard running such an event, which makes everything go smoothly. I am now looking forward to the lecture series! Thanks again."

Ginny Taylor

Board of Directors

President: Paige Atkinson Jessee

Vice President: Ben Arney

Treasurer: Melissa McCue

Secretary: Ellen Peters

Membership Director: Janie Moyers

Program Director: Jane Eng

Program Director: Diana Freeman

Partnerships/Publicity: Carl Bass

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James Dean

Carl Lounsbury

Sherri Phillips

Fred Siegel

Board Member Emeritus:

Forrest Morgan

Jeannie Takesian