



Isle of Wight County Museum & Isle of Wight County Historic Resources



January 2023 Report

J.L. England, Museum Director & Isle of Wight County Historic Resources Manager

Isle of Wight County Museum 103 Main Street, Smithfield

- Visitation: 447
- Special Events

- **Jan. 15. 1781 Battle of Mackie's Mill.** Tomorrow marks the 242nd anniversary of the Revolutionary War engagement between local patriot militia forces and British regular soldiers under Benedict Arnold along Cypress Creek. Join us as we present the story of this historic small battle portraying the bravery and determination of Isle of Wight County citizen-soldiers under the command of Smithfield's own Colonel Josiah Parker. **30 guests.**

- **Jan. 29. Cold War Conversations with Gary Powers Jr.** Gary Powers Jr., founder and chairman emeritus of The Cold War Museum in Warrenton, Virginia, and son of the U-2 pilot whose plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960, will discuss the U-2 Incident. It was one of the most talked-about events of the Cold War. Isle of Wight County's local connection is Nike-Ajax missile base, N-75, in Carrollton. The National Register of Historic Places Historic District site now serves as Isle of Wight County's Parks and Recreation facility which contains the original barracks, mess hall, administration and recreation building, officer/non-commissioned officer family housing, fueling area and underground missile magazines.

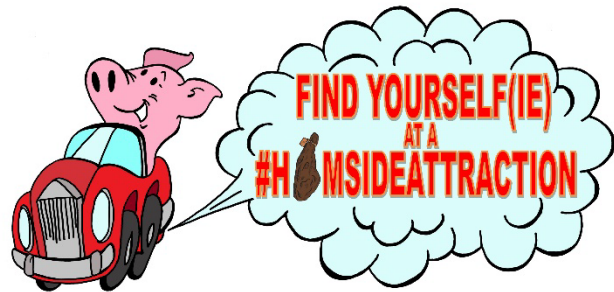
Powers' most recently published the graphic novel *Enemy Territory*. His other books include *Letters from a Soviet Prison* and *Spy Pilot*, all of which help dispel some of the misinformation surrounding the U-2 incident. His books will be available for purchase. **40 guests.**

- **Jan. 31. LUNCH & LEARN: Battle of Smithfield.** Join us for a 159th anniversary recounting of "the Town of Smithfield's most dramatic event." This two-day engagement between Union and Confederate troops saw artillery and musket fire reverberating up and down Main Street eventually resulting in the destruction of the US Army Gunboat *Smith Briggs*. Meet your guide at the museum for a brief overview of this Civil War battle as well as a walk along Main Street to several sites associated with the significant events from January 30 to February 2, 1864. **20 guests.**



- Livestreaming Events. We continue to connect to visitors, supporters, fans and the community via social media. Our livestreaming tours and programs on Facebook are driving traffic and enhancing interaction on our sites. Events this month, still viewable in the videos section of our Facebook page, include:

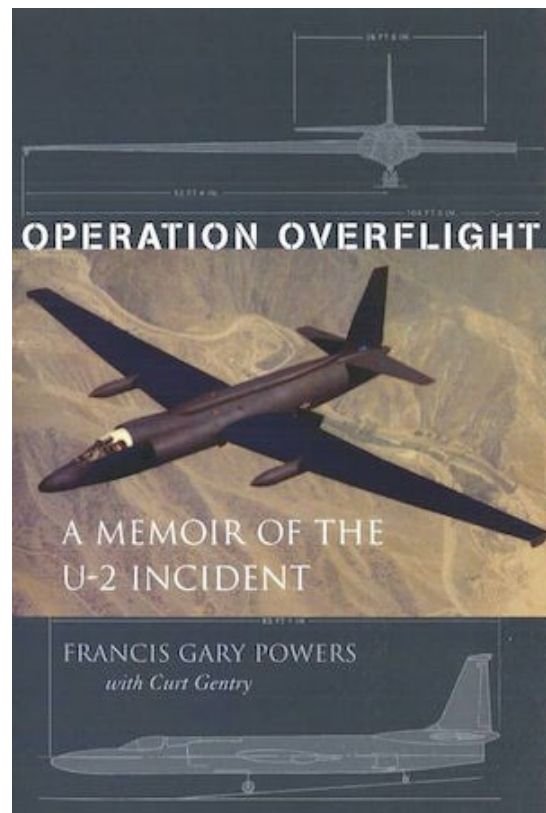
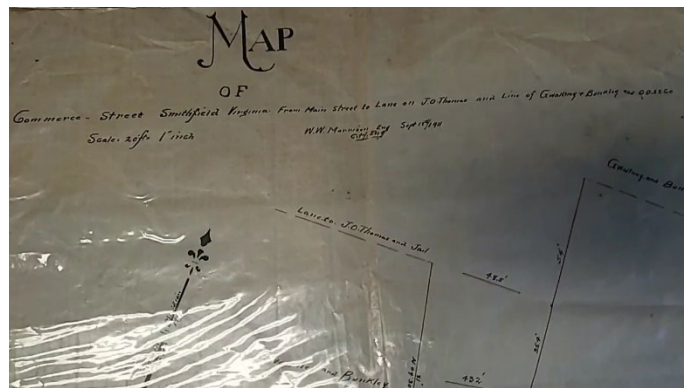
- **Jan. 3. LIVE at 12:05: Welcome 2023!** Director Jennifer England highlights our 2023 as well as a discussion of special events to come this year. Make your plans to visit us.
- **Jan. 5. LIVE at 12:05: Fishing in the 17th Century.** A discussion of sturgeon and early fishing methods in 17th century Virginia.
- **Jan. 10. LIVE at 12:05: Roadside Attractions!** Curator Rachel Popp discusses the history of roadside attractions, highlighting the marketing style of billboards and similar advertising tools used to encourage tourists to visit them. Brightly colored billboards with unusual sayings were memorable and eye-catching ways to grab the attention of travelers using the U.S. Interstate Highway System.
- **Jan. 12. LIVE at 12:05: Our Grant from Virginia is for Lovers for our Hamside Attractions Marketing Campaign.** Director Jennifer England discusses our upcoming grant-funded marketing campaign to highlight all the Hamside Attractions in Smithfield and Isle of Wight County. You'll FIND YOURSELF(IE) here in Visit Smithfield VA. #LoveVa #HamsideAttraction
- **Jan. 17. LIVE at 12:05: National Popcorn Day!** Join Curator Rachel Popp on a brief journey through popcorn history! Popcorn has long been a



beloved snack in North America with some of the first written mentions created by early French explorers who described the way the Iroquois popped kernels in pottery jars full of heated sand. Mass consumption of this already popular snack reached new heights in the 1890s with the creation of the first popcorn-popping machine. Popularity increased even more dramatically around 1981 when the first microwave popcorn bags added convenience to this delicious treat.



- **Jan. 19. LIVE at 12:05: Time for Tea.** A brick of tea stands at the ready to brew up an afternoon cuppa in china that once belonged to Josiah Parker.
- **Jan. 24. LIVE at 12:05: Paper Maps Make a Comeback!** Even in this digital age, physical maps remain popular and are making a bit of a comeback. The earliest known map was discovered in Iraq in the 1880s and was a world map created by the Babylonians in the 5th century BCE. Today, paper maps continue to be purchased despite the many digital options as art to hang on walls or as a tool for a more immersive experience when visiting a new place. Check out two interesting maps pulled from collection storage with the museum's curator, Rachel Popp.
- **Jan. 26. LIVE at 12:05: Cold War Conversations.** Join us at 2 p.m. Sunday for a lecture and book signing with Gary Powers Jr. Gary Powers Jr., founder and chairman emeritus of The Cold War Museum in Warrenton, Virginia, and son of the U-2 pilot whose plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960, will



discuss the U-2 Incident. It was one of the most talked-about events of the Cold War. Isle of Wight County's local connection is Nike-Ajax missile base, N-75, in Carrollton. The National Register of Historic Places Historic District site now serves as Isle of Wight County's Parks and Recreation facility which contains the original barracks, mess hall, administration and recreation building, officer/non-commissioned officer family housing, fueling area and underground missile magazines. Powers' most recently published the graphic novel *Enemy Territory*. His other books include *Letters from a Soviet Prison* and *Spy Pilot*, all of which help dispel some of the misinformation surrounding the U-2 incident. His books will be available for purchase.

- **Jan. 31. LIVE at 12:05: Wax Seals.** Wax seals were popular as early as the Middle Ages and used by the wealthy ruling classes to authenticate and legitimize documents as well as to seal envelopes for tampering prevention. The two examples of seal presses featured here are from the Parker Family and present their motto and family crest. Wax seals are becoming popular once again. Be sure to try your hand at this re-emerging art!



- **Behind These Walls**

- People, objects and places all tell stories, and it is the history of a community that shows its unique character. This video series, launched in 2020, allows some of the county's most interesting structures to share their stories. On Jan. 27, **the Isle of Wight Courthouse Mill** aired. Its history dates to the 17th century. View all episodes in this series on the museum's YouTube Channel, Facebook page or website. YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKfQqNu8tVY>.



- **Groups/Tours/Programs**

- Jan. 5. Ability Center of Virginia, Virginia Beach. Guided tour, lunch and a discussion of 18th century imports, spices and scents. 25 guests.
- Jan. 12. Smithfield Foods' Pro Path Leaders. Guided tour and downtown tour. 10 guests.
- Jan. 17. Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism's 55 & Better, Chesapeake. Guided tour and lecture. 14 guests.
- Jan. 26. Everyday Angels, Portsmouth. Guided tour. 5 guests.
- Jan. 26. Chesapeake Parks, Recreation and Tourism's 55 & Better, Chesapeake. Guided tour and lecture. 17 guests.



- Gift Shop
 - Mid-year inventory was completed.
- Exhibit/Project Update
 - **Sprigg Wing, Phase II: Crops, Trade & Merchants.** A new timeline as well as exhibits about colonial businesses, the tobacco industry and mills are in production.
 - **First Residents.** The addition of the 18th century dugout canoe requires new interpretive panels and display material. Installation of these new panels is pending.
 - **Civil War Trails.** New signage for Fort Huger and Fort Boykin is in production.
 - **Local Treasures.** Currently on display is the collection of **Robert Cox** which showcases artifacts recovered from one of Isle of Wight County's early courthouses, the **Mount Holly Courthouse**. Artifacts date to the 1600s and include coins, buttons, leather ornaments, pottery and harmonica reeds. This exhibit concept displays the private collections of Isle of Wight County residents and/or those with a connection to the area. For more information and applications: www.historicisleofwight.com/local-treasures.html.
 - **Sign Project: Wharf Hill.** In conjunction with Historic Smithfield, the sign at the base of Wharf Hill was rewritten and redesigned to be more reflective of the history in that location and to be more structurally sound. The pedestal was repaired and repointed by the Town of Smithfield, and Historic Smithfield approved the new signage. Installation will take place in February.
 - **English Telephone Box.** The phone box in front of the Bank of Southside Virginia is part of the Isle of Wight County Museum's collection. Dishman Fabrications LLC of Yorktown repaired and media blasted the box, and it was returned to its permanent location in April. Once the door and glass installation are complete, a reception and/or ribbon-cutting will be organized.
 - **Steamboats & Life on the Water; Colonial Isle of Wight; Unusual Objects.** Under development.
 - **Online Exhibits Under Development:** Vietnam War Veterans in Isle of Wight County, Unsung Heroes of Isle of Wight County.
 - **ISLE Be Home for Christmas.** This book project is collecting photographs, postcards, stories, mementos, songbooks, recipes and more that detail the holiday season in Isle of Wight County. This book will be published in November 2023.
- Artifacts
 - Objects added to the collection include photographs, matchbooks and militaria.
- Staff Training and Requirements
 - None.

Financials

• Gift Shop Sales (including tax):	\$ 1,236.21
• Donations:	\$ 200.00
• Admission:	\$ 636.00
• Program/Lecture Fees:	\$ 25.00
Total Monthly Deposit:	\$ 2,097.21

Social Media/Online Presence

- Visit our website at www.historicisleofwight or www.hamcamva.com.
- **LIVE at 12:05.** Each Tuesday and Thursday, we host pop-up broadcasts on the museum's Facebook page. These programs were seen on the Ham Cam, but since COVID-19, programs and livestreaming from Facebook make these programs more mobile. Our segments – shot in the museum or at any of our historic sites - highlight events at the museum, announcements or artifacts from our collection. Tune in each Tuesday and Thursday at 12:05 p.m. on the museum's Facebook page to learn a bit about local history.
- **Facebook:** Isle of Wight County Museum: 3.3K likes and 3.8K followers. Daily posts.
- **Facebook:** World's Oldest Ham: 210/221 likes/followers. Semi-weekly posts.
- **Facebook:** Town of Smithfield. Periodic posts, responses and maintenance.
- **Twitter.** @WorldsOldestHam. The world's oldest ham has his own account. 1,365 followers.
- **Instagram.** @Isleofwightcountymuseum. 1,069 followers.
- **YouTube.** Isle of Wight County Museum. 43 subscribers.
- **Google Reviews.** 4.7/5 overall rating.
- **TripAdvisor.** 4.5/5 star overall rating.
- **Yelp.** 4.5/5 star overall rating.
- **Foursquare/Swarm.** 7.3/10 rating.
- **12 Days of Christmas.** This holiday season, museum staff and volunteers created a version of this popular Christmas carol with our various museum artifacts. The daily series began airing on Christmas Day and aired until the 12th Day of Christmas on January 5. View the series on Facebook or the museum's YouTube channel.



On the twelfth day of Christmas,
my museum preserved for me:

Twelve pipe stem fragments
Eleven photographs
Ten projectile points
Nine patent medicines
Eight Delftware sherds
Seven valentines
Six peanut butter and meat jars
Five cannon balls
Four business ledgers
Three duck decoys
Two roadside attractions
and a 1930s lollipop tree.



Media Coverage/Promotion/Advertising/Lobbying

- Various pieces in area publications to include calendars and events.
- **Jan. 2. *Virginia Living Magazine*.** Website: Most-Viewed Articles of 2022; Articles included “In Praise of Ham Biscuits” and “Smitten with Smithfield,” both published in June 2022 - <https://www.virginaliving.com/exclusives/most-viewed-articles-2022/>
- **Winter 2023: *Inside Virginia Hospitality Magazine*.** Article: 2022 Ordinary Awards: VRLTA Celebrated the Best in Hospitality & Tourism October 3, 2022
- **Jan. 23. *Smithfield Times*.** Website: Article: Museum soliciting entries for ‘ISLE Be Home For Christmas’ book - <https://www.smithfieldtimes.com/2023/01/23/museum-soliciting-entries-for-isle-be-home-for-christmas-book>.

Outreach Lectures & Events

- **Jan. 11. Newport News-Warwick Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Newport News.** Lecture: Cemetery Preservation. 20 guests.
- **Jan. 17. Main Street Baptist Preschool, Smithfield.** Topic: Owls. 18 students.
- **Jan. 20. Hardy Elementary School, The Learning Center, Session 1.** Topic: Owls. 15 students and 3 teachers.
- **Jan. 20. Hardy Elementary School, The Learning Center, Session 2.** Topic: Owls. 15 students and 3 teachers
- **Jan. 20. Hardy Elementary School, Multiple Disabilities.** Topic: Owls. 3 students and 3 teachers.
- **Jan. 24. Carrollton Elementary School, The Learning Center.** Topic: Owls. 18 students and 2 teachers.



Windsor Castle 705 Cedar Street, Smithfield

- No updates.

Fort Boykin 7410 Fort Boykin Trail, Isle of Wight County

- No updates.

Fort Huger 15080 Talcott Terrace, Isle of Wight County

- No updates.

Nike-Carrollton Park

13036 Nike Park Road, Carrollton

- **Nike-Ajax Missile Restoration.** Analyzing metal fabrication needs and 3D reproduction of missing components.
- **Jan. 25. Meeting** with the new Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation director.
- **Signage.** Working to replace the interpretive signage at the park and at Jones Creek for the Nike-Ajax missile base. Four signs will be redesigned and installed. Design currently underway.

Boykin's Tavern, 1820 Clerk's Office & Isle of Wight County Court House Complex

17146 Monument Circle, Isle of Wight County

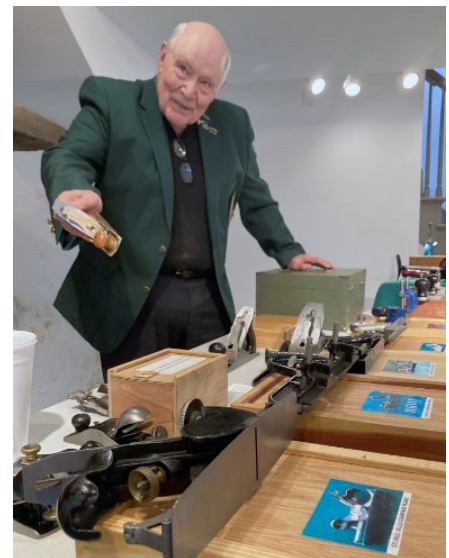
- Boykin's Tavern Visitors: 8.

Meetings

- Jan. 5. Town of Smithfield department heads staff meeting.
- Jan. 19. Civil War Partnership meeting.
- Jan. 24. Smithfield Town Council orientation.

Other Events & Notable Information

- **Volunteer Hours:** 117
- **Annual Report.** The report was completed and submitted to both the Town of Smithfield and Isle of Wight County.
- **Closed.** The museum was closed on New Year's Day, January 1, 2023.
- **Roger Healey.** Our volunteer and friend Roger Healey passed away on January 23. A memorial service will be hosted for him at the museum at a later date.
- **Anne Randall.** On Jan. 23, staff attended the exhumation of Anne Randall at Historic St. Luke's Church & Museum.
- **Riverside Hospital Smithfield.** On Jan. 4 and Jan. 13, staff met with architects and interior designers to plan for exhibits inside this building.
- **Isle of Wight County Department of Planning/Community Development.** Reviewed and provided commentary and/or research for these projects:
 - Edwards Rezoning Request, Moonlight Road, Tax Map 11-01-022.
 - Whitley-Hawkins Borrow Pit Expansion.
 - Rushmere Master Plan.



- **Virginia Tourism Corporation Grant.** This month, four promotional videos were shot and produced, the website's landing page for the campaign was built, the logo was designed and social media advertising was launched. Visit our website here: <https://www.historicisleofwight.com/find-yourselfie-at-a-hamside-attraction.html>.



Safety

- Staff reviewed tips on preventing workplace violence as well as situational guidelines to include robbery, hostage situations and active shooters.
- Jan. 11. Town of Smithfield Safety Committee meeting.

Selections from Our Website and Social Media



World's Oldest Ham @Worldsoldestham · Jan 22

My business card if you need it.
(Yeah, you need it.)
Courtesy of @VCLatVCU!
[#ProfessionalHam](#)



VCL @VCLatVCU · Jan 21

In case you want to view a 3D model of the World's Oldest Ham or even download it, I made a card with a QR code @Worldsoldestham



World's Oldest Ham
(VCU_3D_3709)

The world's oldest ham dates to 1902 and is on continuous exhibit at the Isle of Wight County Museum in Smithfield, Virginia. You can learn more about the ham and view it 24 hours every day on the museum's Ham Cam. The ham was 3D scanned on June 27, 2018 with a Go!Scan 50. The reflectiveness of the ham's brass tag prevented it from being properly scanned and so it is not part of this model. Courtesy of the Isle of Wight County Museum.

Free to download
with the QR code



Bernard K. Means

Isle of Wight County Museum

103 Main St, Smithfield, VA

4.7 ★★★★★ 145 reviews ⓘ

Great job, you got a new
5-star review

Read review



Peggy Metcalf

4 reviews

★★★★★ 2 days ago **NEW**

One of the best local museums we've been to!



January 23

Loving the love on Google reviews.
Leave us one!



January 25

The Pagan River is a 12.5-mile-long tributary of the James River. Formed about three miles north of Smithfield, the river runs narrow until it is joined by Cypress Creek. It then opens to a large expanse of wetlands and marsh before bottlenecking into the James River. Trade and commerce thrived along the banks of the Pagan in the colonial era. Wharf Hill was witness to exports such as tobacco, lumber and pork.