

The Broadside



The voice of The Mathews Maritime Foundation

Museum Located at 482 Main Street, Mathews, VA Mail to PO Box 1201, Mathews, VA 23109
804-725-4444 on the web at www.mathewsmaritime.com

Blue Ways Trail...

A new Mathews Blueways information kiosk has been installed at the Mathews Maritime Museum. Visitors exploring Mathews County's waterways now have a new resource to help them discover paddling and boating opportunities. The kiosk provides convenient access to maps and information about the County's growing network of blueway trails.

The kiosk, located at the museum entrance at 482 Main Street, serves as a welcoming stop for residents and visitors interested in kayaking, canoeing, paddle boarding and exploring Mathews County's scenic rivers, creeks, and Chesapeake Bay shoreline.



Mike Moore, Pete Hall, Philip Mutton installing the kiosk

The project was made possible through the efforts of dedicated volunteers who designed and installed the kiosk. It will feature informa-

tion about the Mathews Blueways program, trail locations, access points, safety information and opportunities to experience the county's unique maritime environment.

The installation reflects the continuing partnership between the Mathews Blueways initiative and the Mathews Maritime Museum in promoting outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and the county's rich maritime heritage.

Virginia vs Maryland- Log Canoe Racing...

By Mike Moore (photos by author except as noted by an *)

"Virginia boats can't sail" was the challenge from Johnson Hines, owner of *Flying Cloud*, Maryland's title-holding log canoe. Garland Miller, a highly competitive sailor and Mathews County native, took exception to that remark and in the summer of 1937, rigged up a 32-year-old Poquoson-style log canoe for battle in the Tred Avon River off Oxford, Maryland. "Log Canoe" can bring to mind a rustic, prehistoric contraption but in actuality these local manifestations of indigenous dugouts have evolved into highly refined sailing vessels. Maryland log canoes have moved on from their working roots to promote speed over other important traits, such as stability. They fly clouds of sail from multiple

Keeping the Past in the Present Preserving it for the Future

masts and are kept upright by a ship's company of off-season linebackers, who clamber up and down portable "hiking boards" to keep the dry-side up.

According to E.V. Brewington's book "Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes" Virginia log canoes came to be called "Poquoson" canoes, since the ultimate Virginia model emerged from that region. These boats retained their working configurations and were considered to be slower but definitely more seaworthy than their Maryland counterparts of the same time period. While Virginia canoes have largely faded away, Maryland continues to host spectacular log canoe racing on the Eastern Shore waters of the Choptank, Tred Avon and Miles Rivers. Canoes that have remained in families for over 100-years compete frequently during the summer months.



Maryland Log Canoes racing *

In Mathews, at the turn of the 20th century, Garland Miller would recount how they would use their Virginia log canoes for oystering in the winter and fishing in the summer with an occasional informal holiday race.

Miller fitted out his Poquoson canoe with a modern "Bermuda" style rig and named her "*Tradition*". Maryland canoes have highly refined racing hulls, but retain their un-stayed, working rigs. *Tradition* managed with a crew of 4 or 5, a couple of hiking boards and some sand bags for ballast. In contrast, *Flying Cloud* can have a crew of up to 15, most of whom are occupied shifting the hiking boards and keeping the boat upright.



Garland Miller's *Tradition* *

According to a Ledger-Star article by E. E. Edgar, Garland Miller took *Tradition* to Oxford, Maryland in the summers of 1937, 1938 and 1939 and raced *Flying Cloud* a total of 9-times, and never lost a race, in spite of *Flying Cloud*'s paid captain and crew. Not bad for a Virginia boat that "couldn't sail"! Miller continued to race *Tradition* through the war years and only gave up the boat when she was destroyed in a yard crane accident. Miller then carved out a model for *Tradition II*, a plank-on-frame cruising/racing yacht built to the form of his previous log canoe, and continued to plague the Maryland racing fleets, but that will have to be another story!

Mathews Area Log Canoes...

In the Mathews area, log canoes were the go-to working watercraft up until the introduction of reliable internal combustion engines and their replacement by the "dead-rise" vessels still common today. In spite of their importance to the maritime heritage of Mathews County, few examples remain to be seen. Local builders of log canoes did not use plans or models in their construction; they just worked with the materials available, the desired specifications of the buyer and whatever modifications they wanted to try out.

A collection of logs was assembled, chopped out to form with axes and adzes, pinned together, rigged and done. When their working life was over most canoes would have been abandoned to the elements. If anyone in the Mathews

area has knowledge of a remnant of a log canoe, please get in touch with the Maritime Foundation!

Since the Maritime Foundation had nothing representative of this important part of Mathews maritime heritage, it was decided to craft a small half-hull model, so visitors could at least have some perspective on the form and shape of a Virginia log canoe. In 1947, marine historian Howard Chappelle took the dimensions ("lines") off of "*Volunteer*" a Poquoson log canoe and a copy of these lines were obtained from the Watercraft Collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. To create our half-



hull model, a block of cedar was found for carving, and the block was cut into "lifts", or parallel longitudinal sections that represented the waterlines from the plan.

The lifts were then cut on a bandsaw to represent the waterlines from the top or "plan" view. The lifts were pinned together with dowels and then the form of the hull was revealed by carefully carving away all the chips that were not part of the canoe.

Usually lift models are left so the lifts can be separated and the waterlines traced out. Since the lifts in this model were thin and fragile, they were glued together prior to mounting on the display board.

Trim pieces were cut out to represent the stem, rudder and post, centerboard and masts. Lastly, everything was sanded and oiled with a

mixture of linseed oil and turpentine before mounting on the display board.

If you have log canoe tales to relate or know of any canoe artifacts in our immediate vicinity, please contact the Mathews Maritime Foundation at 804-725-4444 or stop by weekends, 10 am to 2 PM, Fridays and Saturdays, or by appointment.



Hull shape revealed by careful carving



Hull shape achieved, ready for glue up



Peggy of New Point Prints...

We still have a number of the limited edition prints of the John Barber painting of "Peggy of New Point". They are available at \$76.50 each for Foundation members and \$85.00 for non-members. Call Pete Hall at 434.917.5281 to order.

Call for Docents...

Are you a history buff? Can you spare 4 hours a week on a Friday or Saturday? We are calling for volunteers to become docents at the Mathews Maritime Museum. The docent's job is to open the museum on designated days, to welcome visitors, and to give them a guided tour of the museum if they wish. Otherwise visitors can do a self guided tour. In addition, docents will record visitor purchases from the Gift Shop. Dennis Crawford, curator of collections, will meet with prospective docent volunteers individually or in a group, depending on scheduling, to familiarize them with the Museum's collection and procedures. Give Dennis a call at 804-366-5337

Gwynn's Island Boat Shop Activities...

MMF's Boat Shop has been functioning as a venue to receive and repair boats that have been donated to us. In the early years of operation we concentrated on donated boat repair/restoration along with some special projects. Donated boat repairs consisted mostly of cleaning and making the boats presentable for sale.

Some of the special projects we worked on from 2021 through 2023 included the restoration of a 15' Dory boat (saved from the burn pile), a 16' Cape Dory rowing/sailing dinghy, and the building, by rack of eye, of a 10' play yard boat.

In September 2021 we started a boat building class that meets on Saturday mornings throughout the year. Our first project was the construction of a 15' John Gardner designed flat bottomed skiff. Work continued through to completion in September of 2022.

Several volunteer boat builders took part in the project working mostly on Saturdays

throughout the year. These weekly scheduled boat building classes are open to anyone interested in learning the ins and outs of boatbuilding.

Currently, we are finishing up the restoration of an 13' Old Town "Whitecap" sailboat. It is the sister ship of the boat that Robert Manry sailed single handed across the Atlantic in 1965. He left Falmouth, Massachusetts on June 1, and arrived in Falmouth, Cornwall, England 78 days later.

Alongside the Whitecap restoration we have taken the lines off of a 12' Edward Diggs skiff in order to build a replica. The build will be done using the traditional method by which side planks are attached to a stem and bent around a single mid-ship frame and attached to the boat's transom.

Once we have completed the build we plan to offer, in a family boatbuilding event, the opportunity to build this skiff from a kit. The kit to include all materials needed to build the skiff. Price of the kit to a family will depend on the availability and cost of materials.

My hopes for this program are for it to grow with more participation from knowledgeable boat builders and students. The five or six individuals currently attending the sessions is a workable number to be working on one boat. With two boats being built we could manage with a crew of 8 to 10 with two instructors.

All levels of experience are encouraged to participate, whether to learn, teach or both. Visiting hours are Saturday mornings, after 10am. The shop is located on the Gwynn's Island side of the draw bridge about ¼ of a mile on the right, just look for the sign. We'll have the coffee on, stop on by!